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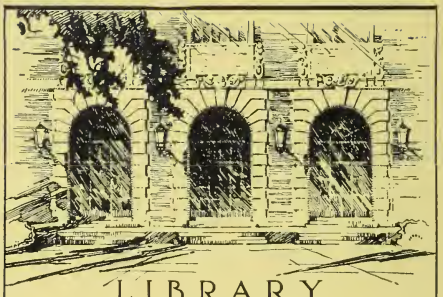

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NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

EDINBURGH, *March* 10, 1864.

MESSRS CLARK have pleasure in forwarding to their Subscribers the first issue for 1864, viz., Lange's Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, vol. 1, and the first volume of the important Commentary by Keil and Delitzsch on the Pentateuch.

The second volume of the latter will form part of the second issue, and the remaining volume will be either the third of Keil or the second of Lange on the Acts of the Apostles.

Messrs Clark beg respectfully to invite special attention to the most valuable LIFE of our LORD, by DR LANGE, which they are issuing apart from the Foreign Theological Library.

Shortly will be published, in Six Volumes, handsomely bound in cloth, lettered in gold, red edges. Subscription price L.1, 15s.

THE LIFE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:

A COMPLETE CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE ORIGIN, CONTENTS, AND CONNECTION OF THE GOSPELS.

Translated from the German of J. P. LANGE, D.D., Professor of Divinity in the University of Bonn, and Edited, with Additional Notes, by the Rev. MARCUS DODS, A.M.

*** *For Syllabus of the above Work, see next page.*

DR LANGE'S LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.

SYLLABUS.

THE object of this comprehensive and masterly work is at once to refute the views of the life of our Lord which have been propagated by negative criticism, and to substitute that consistent history which a truly scientific, enlightened, and incontrovertible criticism educes from the Gospels.

The work is divided into three Books. The first Book is introductory. In this the Author explodes the philosophical fallacies on which the negative criticism rests, and exposes its unsound and inconsistent principles of criticism, establishing, in opposition, the fundamental ideas of the Gospel History (especially that of an individual incarnation), and delivering the principles and method of a trustworthy criticism. The sources of the Life of Jesus are then also discussed, and the authenticity and credibility of the Gospels are vindicated, their origin unfolded, their unity exhibited, and their peculiarities illustrated with greater detail and in a more interesting manner, than has elsewhere been done.

The Second Book, which is the bulk of the work, presents a detailed history of the Life of Jesus, drawn from the Gospels by a minute critical examination. This is given in what is technically called a pragmatical narrative; that is to say, it is so narrated that it is explained; every character introduced is rendered distinct and intelligible; every word and action appears in connection with its motive and meaning, and the whole is *set* in a framework of careful, historical, chronological, and topographical research. It thus forms virtually a pregnant commentary on the Gospels, while the reader is not interrupted by discussions of controverted points, nor by verbal criticism. All this is relegated to the notes which accompany each section, and which further confirm, or show the grounds of those views which are stated in the text.

While the Second Book presents the Life of Jesus in that unity which is formed by the four accounts taken together, the Third Book gives us that same life in its four different aspects, according to the four different Evangelists. In the Second Book *one* representation is given, formed from the four narratives: in the Third, these four representations are separately given in their individual integrity. This is not the least instructive portion of the work, bringing out, as it does very distinctly, the fine arrangement of each Gospel, and the propriety and harmony of its various material.

CLARK'S

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Lechler and Gerok's Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles.
VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:
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MDCCCLXIV.

THEOLOGICAL AND HOMILETICAL COMMENTARY

ON THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

SPECIALLY DESIGNED AND ADAPTED FOR THE USE OF MINISTERS AND STUDENTS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

G. V. LECHLER, D.D., AND K. GEROK.

EDITED BY

J. P. LANGE, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BONN.

TRANSLATED BY

REV. PATON J. GLOAG,

MINISTER OF BLANTYRE.

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NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles in Lange's Bibelwerk is the joint production of Professor Lechler of Leipsic University, and Gerok, a highly esteemed minister in Stuttgard: the "Exegetical Explanations" and the "Dogmatical Thoughts" being by Lechler, and the "Homiletical Hints" by Gerok. Lechler is already well known in Germany as the author of a history of the Apostolic Age (Das apostolische und nachapostolische Zeitalter), a work which has passed through several editions, and which is frequently referred to by English theologians as a work of high authority. He has also written a history of English Deism (Geschichte der englische Deismus).

I have endeavoured in my translation to avoid, on the one hand, the faults of a servile and merely verbal translation, and, on the other hand, to guard against an imperfect rendering of the full sense of the original. I have frequently experienced great difficulty in avoiding these defects. Where I have erred, it has generally arisen from over-anxiety to give as exactly as possible the precise sense of the German. Hence I have little doubt that I have made use of several expressions not in exact accordance with English idioms.

I think it superfluous to say anything about the merits of the original work; of that, the reader must judge for himself. He will find the "Exegetical Explanations" of Lechler per-

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spicuous and instructive, though perhaps he errs, like German writers in general, in over-minuteness; whilst the "Dogmatical Observations" are thoughtful, and, with some exceptions, free from that obscurity which is too often to be found in the doctrinal discussions of German writers. The "Homiletical Hints" consist chiefly of extracts from German theologians, such as Schleiermacher, Lisco, Starke, Besser, Brandt, etc., and these are, in general, well chosen and suggestive.

At one time I intended to have added a few notes by way of explanation, qualification, or supplement; but I was soon compelled to abandon that design, as I found it much more laborious than I at first supposed, and requiring more time than I could command. I have therefore thought it best to abstain entirely from any observations of my own. I have only to add, that in translating the work without explanatory notes, I do not hold myself responsible for, nor am I to be considered as coinciding with, all the opinions contained in it: though the reader will find very little to object to, and will be gratified with the evangelical spirit which pervades it throughout.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1.

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THIS book stands alone among the writings of the New Testament. Whilst the life of Jesus—that is to say, in reality only the short period of three years—is related in the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles is the only book of the Bible which records the sacred history after the earthly life of the Redeemer, for a period of at least thirty years (from the year 30 to 64 after Christ), and that too in intimate connection with the life of Jesus Himself. For the book professes to be the second part of the Gospel of Luke, so that the Acts of the Apostles is nothing else than a continuation of the life of the Lord. This connection is exceedingly important and instructive: for, in consequence of it, the earthly life of Jesus, concluded with the ascension, has its fruit and continued efficacy, and the heavenly life of Christ, commencing with the ascension, has its manifestation and proof in the deeds and experiences of the apostles and first churches. And, on the other hand, the experiences of the disciples and first churches are only seen in a true and sacred light when they are understood as the operations of the exalted Lord, and of the Spirit promised

and sent by Him. Still further: if the Gospel of Luke is distinguished from the other three Gospels by its large-hearted and human spirit, its sequel, the Acts of the Apostles, perfectly corresponds with this characteristic; for what is in the Gospel only prophecy, indication, type and parable, is in the Acts converted into fulfilment, fact, and history. If in the Gospel of Luke the Saviour recognised the gratitude of a Samaritan, and related the parable of the good Samaritan; in the Acts the apostles witnessed still greater things, when many in Samaria were converted, and received the Gospel with joy and thankfulness. And if in the Gospel of Luke not a few of the sayings of Jesus point to the conversion of the Gentiles and their admission into the kingdom of God; the Acts of the Apostles relates how the word of God gradually reached the Gentiles, and how they became naturalized citizens of the kingdom of God. If the Gospel of Luke is distinguished from the others as the human Gospel, the same wide range, embracing the human race, is also recognised in his history of the apostles: it was originally composed for a Gentile Christian, the same Theophilus to whom the Gospel is dedicated; and the largest portion of the book is, in fact, devoted to the history of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. Nevertheless, the conversion of the Gentiles, or Gentile Christianity, is not the chief, much less the exclusive object of the book; it and the Bible in general are not so one-sided; on the contrary, Luke has as much at heart the conversion of the Jews to their Messiah and Saviour, that is to say, the Jewish Christian Church. And it is precisely the union of Jewish and Gentile Christianity, the unity of the Church of Christ in Israel and among the Gentiles, the harmony of the Apostles Peter and Paul, which is the centre-point of the Acts of the Apostles. What the Lord says to His apostles, "Ye shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts i. 8), is the peculiar theme of our book. The effective testimony of the apostles, anointed by the power of the Holy Ghost, from Jerusalem to the end of the earth, or the progress of the Church of Christ from the Jews to the Gentiles, forms its contents. But it is only on this account a sacred book, worthy of the Bible, because it treats not merely of a human history—the deeds and actions of men, but of a divine history

—the rule and government of Christ, the testimony of His Spirit in the deeds, words, and experiences of the apostles and the Church. And just because the Acts of the Apostles relates the beginning of the Church of Christ—its establishment, development, and first government—it contains the eternal principles of the Christian Church in every relation—"the ground-plans of individual, congregational, and church Christian life." "The Acts of the Apostles," observes Starke, "is a witness of apostolic doctrine and ancient Christianity; a rule and model of Church government, discipline, and order; an arsenal for the Church in its contests with Antichrist; a medicine-chest for all soul-destroying plagues of heresies in faith and morals; a storehouse for faith, patience, and hope; a mirror and a spur to love and its works; a vast treasure,—so full is it of true learning and right doctrine."

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§ 2.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The testimonies for the genuineness and ecclesiastical authority of the Acts of the Apostles do not, it is true, go back to so high an antiquity as they do for many of the other writings of the New Testament; for the words of the apostolic fathers, in which we find allusions to certain passages in the Acts of the Apostles, are not so clear and express that we can rely on them confidently. Still, however, at the end of the second and beginning of the third century, when the canon of the New Testament began to be more firmly settled, testimonies so numerous, weighty, and indubitable appear, that there can hardly remain a doubt concerning the general and ancient recognition of the Acts of the Apostles as a sacred writing composed by the Evangelist Luke. Therefore Eusebius has not hesitated to place this book among the universally acknowledged writings of the New Testament canon. The contrary assertion of certain heretical sects, as the Ebionites, Marcionites, Severians, and Manichæans, who rejected this book entirely because it was irreconcilable with their doctrines, is not sufficient to shake the

fact of its ancient and general recognition by the Church. The circumstance also is of no great importance, that, according to a passage in Photius, some regarded, not Luke, but either Clement Romanus or Barnabas, as the author; for this is explained from the fact which Chrysostom mentions in his homilies on the Acts: "To many," he observes, "it is not known concerning this book that it is extant, or who has written and composed it." It is easy to understand that the Gospels and the Epistles may have been much more read than the Acts of the Apostles (as is even the case in modern times), so that it could not but be that some uncertainty should prevail with many concerning the author.

In our time, when doubt has become so prevalent, it has at least never been questioned that the Acts of the Apostles and the third Gospel have one and the same author. That this was Luke, the companion of the Apostle Paul, has certainly been often disputed, but only on reasons the weight of which must not be too highly estimated.[1]

The time of its composition cannot be determined with any certainty. From the circumstance that it does not mention the death of Paul, we are not authorized to infer that it was written before that event. There may have been many reasons for its silence. We would rather venture to adopt the opinion that not only the death of Paul, but also the destruction of Jerusalem, had occurred; for, as Irenæus relates, Luke wrote his Gospel (the first part, composed at all events before the Acts) after the death of Peter and Paul. On the other hand, the book could not have been written much later, and therefore it may be referred to the 70th or 80th year of the first century.

[1] The author has omitted the late attacks of the school of Baur on the historical credibility of the Acts of the Apostles, because, first, a detailed treatment of the subject would occupy too much space; and, secondly, these attacks may be considered as already sufficiently confuted and overcome. We would only mention that the literature, as well as the essential points of the discussion, are treated in our "Apostolic Times;" but we would especially refer to the monograph of the author, "The Apostolic and the Post-Apostolic Times," as the principal work on the subject.—NOTE BY LANGE.

§ 3.

THEOLOGICAL AND HOMILETICAL LITERATURE OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

For lists of special treatises on the Acts of the Apostles, or dissertations on its different sections, consult Heidegger, Enchir. Biblicum, chap. 7, p. 810; Danz' Universal Dictionary of Theological Literature, pp. 70–73; Lilienthal's Biblical Archives, 1745, pp. 358–420; and Walch's Bibliotheca Theologica, vol. 4, 1765, pp. 654–662.

The following monographical works are worthy of special mention: Chrysostom's Homilies; the Expositions of Theophylact and Oecumenius;—and in later times, Limborch's Commentary, Rotterdam 1711; Walch's Dissertationes in Acta Apostolorum, 3 vols., Jena 1756; the Translation and Exposition of Morus, edited by Dindorf, Leipsic 1794; Hildebrand's History of the Apostles of Jesus, treated exegetically and hermeneutically, 1824; Stier's Words of the Apostles, 1829; second edition, 1861; Schrader's Apostle Paul, 1830; Neander's History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles, 1832; Baur's Apostle Paul, 1845; Baumgarten's Acts of the Apostles, or History of the Development of the Church, from Jerusalem to Rome, 1852; second edition, 1859; Lange's "Apostolic Times," 1854; Ewald's "History of the Israelites," vol. 6, also with the title, "History of the Apostolic Age to the Destruction of Jerusalem," 1858; Hackett's Commentary on the Original Text of the Acts of the Apostles, Boston 1858.

Practical and homiletical treatises: Menken's Scenes in the Life of the Apostle Paul and the first Christian Churches, according to certain chapters in the Acts of the Apostles, Bremen 1828; Brandt's Apostolic Pastor, a work on the Acts of the Apostles, for the better performance of the ministerial office, 1848; Williger's Biblical Studies on the Acts of the Apostles, 1850; Langbein's Sermons on the Acts, Grimma 1852; Leonhardi and Spiegelhauer's Homiletical Handbook of Sermons from the Acts of the Apostles, 1855; Da Costa's Acts of the Apostles, expounded for ministers and congregations, translated by Reifert, Bremen 1860; Besser's Biblical Studies on the Acts, for the use of congregations, 1860.

§ 4.

THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The apostles of the Lord as His witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth; the founding, government, and propagation of the Church of Christ in Israel and among the Gentiles from Jerusalem to Rome: this fundamental idea of the Acts of the Apostles comprehends a great number of separate facts, sayings, and events, which at the same time prefigure and represent in its chief features the whole subsequent history of the Church.

Part First.

The founding of the Church of Christ as a Church for Israel and for all mankind (chap. i. and ii.).

Preface: Connection to the Gospel as the first part of the work (chap. i. 1–3).

Section I. Preparations for the founding of the Church (chap. i. 4–26).

A. The ascension of Jesus, and His last instructions, commands, and promises to the apostles (chap. i. 4–11: compare Mark xvi. 19, and Luke xxiv. 49).

B. Return of the apostles to Jerusalem; their continued and intimate fellowship with each other; the completion of the apostolic number by the appointment of Matthias to the apostolic office (vers. 12–26).

Section II. The founding of the Church as the Church of all nations by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, by the inspired testimony of Peter, by the conversion of three thousand, and by the holy fellowship of believers (chap. ii. 1–47).

A. The miracle of Pentecost itself, in its external manifestation and internal operation: those met together are filled with the Holy Ghost, and speak with other tongues (vers. 1–4).

B. The mixed impression of this occurrence, namely, the speaking with tongues, on the Jews out of all lands then present at Jerusalem (vers. 5–13).

C. The testimony of Peter (vers. 14–36).

D. The effect of this speech, and of the admonitions attached

to it, in the conversion of three thousand, who are added to the disciples by baptism (vers. 37–41).

E. The holy, godly, and blessed condition of the primitive Church (vers. 42–47).

Part Second.

The Church of Christ in Jerusalem, in its development and training, with its conflicts and victories, its deeds and sufferings (chap. iii.–vii.).

Section I. The cure of the lame man: an apostolic miracle in the power of Jesus Christ, with its results: on the one hand, the testimony of Peter to the people concerning Jesus Christ; and, on the other hand, the arrest of Peter and John, who, after a powerful defence before the council, are set at liberty. All this serves to the strengthening of the faith and to the advancement of the Church. The public spirit and brotherly love of believers (chap. iii. and iv.).

Section II. An internal danger averted by the miraculous and sudden judgment on the sin of Ananias and Sapphira: the effect of this event; and the internal progress of the Church by the verification of the miraculous powers of the apostles (chap. v. 1–16).

Section III. A stronger onset of the Sadducean party, whereby all the apostles are arrested, brings about, by means of their miraculous deliverance from prison, their bold answer before the council and the intercession of Gamaliel,—sufferings, indeed, for the sake of Jesus, but in the end deliverance (chap. v. 17–42).

Section IV. The complaint of the Hellenists of the neglect of their widows in the distribution of alms to the poor induces the apostles to choose seven men, and to appoint them to this service (chap. vi. 1–7).

Section V. Stephen, one of the seven, whose labours were full of the Spirit and blessed, accused of blasphemy, defends himself in a powerful speech, and is stoned in consequence: he dies victorious in the name of Jesus (chap. vi. 8–vii. 60).

Part Third.

The Church of Christ in all Judea and Samaria, and in its transition to the Gentiles (chap. viii.–xii.).

Section I. The persecution of the church at Jerusalem, beginning with the stoning of Stephen, in which Saul acts a conspicuous part, occasions the dispersion of believers over Judea and Samaria, and through this very means the propagation of the Gospel in these regions, and the conversion of a proselyte from a distance (chap. viii.).

Section II. The conversion of Saul: his labours and the events which befell him immediately after (chap. ix. 1–30).

Section III. Peter, traversing the churches of Judea, is induced by a special revelation to visit Cornelius, a Gentile, to preach Christ in his house, and to baptize him and his household; a step at first called in question in Jerusalem, but in consequence of the answer of Peter finally acquiesced in with joy (chap. ix. 31–xi. 18).

A. During the peaceful and flourishing period of the churches in the Holy Land, Peter makes visits to them. On this occasion he cures the paralytic Eneas at Lydda, and raises Tabitha from the dead at Joppa (chap. ix. 31–43).

B. From Joppa Peter is sent to the Roman centurion Cornelius in consequence of divine revelations to both, to whom he preaches Christ, and, as the gift of the Holy Ghost was forthwith imparted to him and the other Gentile hearers, he orders baptism to be conferred (chap. x.).

C. Peter, by appealing to the manifest guidance of the Lord in this matter, effectually overcomes the objections of the narrow-minded Jewish Christians in Jerusalem to fellowship with the Gentiles, so that they are silenced and thank God for the conversion of the Gentiles (chap. xi. 1–18).

Section IV. The planting of a Gentile Christian church at Antioch. The mutual fellowship of faith and love between this church and Jerusalem. Saul in connection with the church at Antioch (chap. xi. 19–30).

A. The founding of the church at Antioch by the Hellenists (chap. xi. 19–21).

B. The church at Jerusalem sends Barnabas to Antioch, who strengthens the young church and brings Saul to it (vers. 22–26).

C. The church at Antioch evinces its brotherly fellowship with the Christians in Judea by sending aid to them in a famine (vers. 27–30).

Section V. The persecution of the church at Jerusalem by Herod, in which James is put to death, and Peter, on the contrary, escapes by a miraculous deliverance from prison and by withdrawing from Jerusalem, is brought to a termination by a divine judgment on the persecutor (chap. xii.).

Part Fourth.

Propagation of the Church of Christ among the Gentiles by Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, in three missionary journeys, from each of which he returns to Jerusalem, and fosters and preserves the union between the Gentile Christians and the original Jewish Christian Church (chap. xiii.–xxi. 16).

Section I. The first missionary journey of Paul, in company with Barnabas, to the island of Cyprus and the Asiatic provinces of Pamphylia and Pisidia (chap. xiii. and xiv.).

Section II. Mission of the Gentile apostles, Paul and Barnabas, on the affairs of the Gentile Christians, from Antioch to Jerusalem. Transactions there, and their results (chap. xv. 1–35).

Section III. Second missionary journey of Paul, in company with Silas and Timothy, to Asia Minor and Europe (chap. xv. 36–xviii. 22).

Section IV. Third missionary journey of Paul to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece: return to Jerusalem (chap. xviii. 23–xxi. 16).

Part Fifth.

The imprisonment of Paul; the effect of which is, that he is able, not only to bear witness of Jesus before his own people, the chief council, rulers, and princes, but also that he is sent to Rome, the capital of the world, to testify there of Jesus Christ before Jews and Gentiles (chap. xxi. 17–xxviii.).

Section I. Occasion and attending circumstances of the imprisonment of Paul (chap. xxi. 17–40).

Section II. Imprisonment of Paul at Jerusalem: his defence before the Jewish people and the chief council (chap. xxii.–xxiii. 11).

Section III. Paul is sent to Cæsarea, and defends himself there before the Roman procurators; first before Felix, and then before Festus and King Herod Agrippa II. (chap. xxiii. 12–xxvi. 32).

Section IV. Voyage of Paul from Cæsarea to Rome (chap. xxvii. 1–xxviii. 15).

Section V. Residence and activity of Paul at Rome (chap. xxviii. 16–31).

Lange, in his "Apostolical Times," has made several ingenious observations on the arrangement of the Acts of the Apostles. With regard to the section chap. iii.–xii., he remarks that here external and internal periods of darkness and light for the Church alternate, and that out of each period of darkness a new corresponding period of light is prepared by the operation of the Spirit of Christ. Thus, in the above section, he enumerates five external and four internal periods of darkness. In a similar manner, Lange divides the journeys of the Apostle Paul (chap. xiii.–xxi.) into two corresponding divisions, namely, into three missionary journeys, and into three journeys out of his missionary career to Jerusalem, which regularly alternate. Now, certainly the observation is correct, that Paul from each missionary journey returned to Jerusalem, and that he maintained his Gentile missionary course in connection with the original church. But yet the second return to Jerusalem is merely indicated with five words, and is so slightly mentioned that it has often escaped the notice of readers and expositors; at least, it is very evident that Luke himself laid no great stress on this journey, so as to consider it a material part of his history. And as regards the double series of external and internal periods of light and darkness, it does not appear that such a view entered into the thoughts of the writer in the composition of his book. Thus, then, with respect to the division of the book, taken as a whole, and its internal arrangement, we think that we have expressed it simply in the above five chief divisions corresponding to the word of the Lord (Acts i. 8), in which the theme of the Acts of the Apostles is indicated.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

PART FIRST.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AS A CHURCH FOR ISRAEL AND FOR ALL MANKIND (CHAP. I. AND II.).

PREFACE.

CONNECTION TO THE GOSPEL AS THE FIRST PART OF THE WORK.

Chap. i. 1–3.

1 The first treatise I have indeed composed, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began to do and to teach, 2 Until the day when He was taken up, after He, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen: 3 To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing to them for forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *The first treatise.*—Luke names his Gospel the πρῶτος λόγος, the first book, not merely because according to time he wrote it before the Acts of the Apostles, but also because according to its matter it contains the germs of all that the history of the apostles and of the Church has to narrate.

2. *What Jesus began to do and to teach* is related in the Gospel: where then are we to seek for the continuation of this doing and teaching? Certainly it is obvious that Luke means to say, that he has related the order of the deeds and discourses

of Jesus from the beginning, so that it is self-evident that what has been begun has been continued, and that during the earthly life of Jesus. Still, however, he must have had a special reason for laying stress on the word *beginning;* and this reason can only be found in this, that Luke considered the whole earthly activity of Jesus, in contradistinction to His heavenly operation, as only the beginning and laying the foundation, so that Jesus in His humiliation made the beginning and laid the foundation of that which, now that He has gone to glory, He has completed by the apostles (Starke). Others regard this meaning of ἤρξατο as capricious, and as introducing a subjective contemplation of history (De Wette, Meyer); but without reason, for the whole of the "Acts of the Apostles," from beginning to end, represents this idea of the history, that the exalted Lord works in, and with, and for His apostles, and carries on that work which He had begun during His life on earth. Thus, even in the first chapter, the lot falling on Matthias is regarded as an evident token of the choice on the part of the Lord, who knows the heart; the outpouring of the Holy Ghost is an act of the exalted Lord; and when Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and invoked Him, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," this, according to the meaning of the words, was an answer to prayer, whilst Jesus stood ready to receive him. These few examples will suffice as proofs, that those authors do not introduce a subjective view of history, but take the correct view of our book, who regard the conduct of the apostles and the Church there related, as the deeds of the exalted Redeemer, and as the continuation of what He Himself had begun during His earthly course.

3. *Concerning all that* Jesus did and taught, Luke says he had written. He here asserts the completeness of his narrative of the life of Jesus, without, however, claiming to have related all the acts of Jesus without exception, which was as little the case with Luke as it was with John (John xx. 30); indeed, according to John xxi. 25, it was not possible to relate without exception all that Jesus did. And, indeed, it was not at all necessary; for it concerns Christians not to know much or everything, but to know the chief points of the truth, and these are given us in the Gospel of Luke, as well as in his history of the apostles and in the word of God generally.

4. *Until the day that Jesus was taken up.*—Thus far proceeds the Gospel: from that day commences the "Acts of the Apostles." The ascension of Jesus is an occurrence common to both, the end of the Gospel and the beginning of the history of the apostles and the Church,—the turning-point between both. The ascension, the glorious termination of the visible life of Jesus on earth, is also the commencement, full of the future and of promise, of His invisible presence and operation on earth. As Rieger remarks: "The history of the ascension is here again put first, that we may always remember that everything which has passed into the visible, and is written in this book, had its origin in the invisible world, whither the Lord Jesus has for us entered. Whoever would properly understand the form of the Church of Christ on earth, must have continually before his eyes the ascension of Jesus, and the approaching reception of His kingdom into the invisible world, as also its future manifestation." The expression "He was taken up" represents the ascension as something that happened to Jesus, that is to say, as an act of God the Father. At the same time the word denotes that it was an exaltation, not only as regards space, from earth to heaven, although the expression proceeds on this idea, but spiritually and really, inasmuch as Jesus has attained to a higher position, power, and dignity.

5. The ascension day is with Luke important, not only on account of the exaltation of Jesus, but also on account of the *commands* then given to His chosen apostles. These commands or charges were the last will of the Lord; and the actions of the apostles were really apostolical, only so far as they were nothing else than the fulfilment of this will. How important this appears to him, Luke gives us to understand by these words: *διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου.* Many interpreters, and among the latest, Olshausen and De Wette, connect these words with *οὓς ἐξελέξατο*, "whom He had chosen by the Holy Ghost;" but the position of the words, which would be much forced thereby, does not permit of this connection. The simplest and most natural meaning of the words is: Jesus gave, through the Holy Ghost, by means of the Holy Ghost, commandments:—namely, Jesus, anointed with the Holy Ghost, has in the power of the Holy Ghost given commandments to His apostles to be His witnesses; so that this command was likewise a command of the Spirit.

6. *To whom also He showed Himself alive.*—This, as well as the earlier election, was a condition of and a preparation for the charge to be imparted to them. For how could He have expected and commanded them to be His witnesses to the world, if He had not imparted to them intelligible evidence and strong conviction that He lives, after He had suffered and died? And this certainty of belief and of conviction which the apostles should obtain, as the appointed eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of Christ, demanded infallible proofs, not only one, but many (πολλὰ τεκμήρια). He therefore gave them many proofs and tokens that it was He Himself, the Crucified One, and not another, and that He in reality lives: proofs through the eye, the ear, and the touch.

7. *Forty days.*—It has been lately asserted that the forty days intervening between the resurrection and ascension is a contradiction to the account given us in the Gospel of Luke, where the ascension is ostensibly transferred to the very day of the resurrection (Zeller's Acts of the Apostles, and Meyer's Commentary). This supposition, however, is without foundation; for, as Lange in his "Apostolic Times" has proved, it is impossible that all which Luke relates in chap. xxiv. of his Gospel, and especially from ver. 13 to the end, could have occurred in the space of one day. Only it is so far true, that Luke in his Gospel has not distinguished times and intervals, and that if we had only that account of the occurrences between the resurrection and the ascension, we would never have been able to know that a space of time so long as forty days intervened between these two events. But it is evident from a more accurate view of the context, particularly Luke xxiv. 44, 50, that there is no contradiction—even sections are recognisable, although an exact determination of time is awanting.

8. *Speaking of the kingdom of God.*—Between the resurrection and the ascension, the Lord not only by frequent appearances to the apostles furnished them with certain conviction that He lives, and accustomed them to know Him as near though invisible; but He likewise by His word and doctrine initiated them yet further into the mysteries of the kingdom of God,—*speaking to them of the kingdom of God.* The kingdom of God was, as before the crucifixion, so after the resurrection, the chief point of the instruction and doctrine of Jesus; and

these discourses on the kingdom before the ascension laid the foundation both for the doctrine and for the conduct of the apostles after the exaltation of their Lord.

DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL REMARKS.

1. The first treatise of Luke was the Gospel of Christ, the second the apostolic Church history. In all Christian knowledge, the knowledge of the person of Christ must be the first and chief point. Christ, the God-man, is the foundation that is laid: everything that shall subsist must be built on Him.

2. The history of the Church of Christ is the continuation of the divine-human life of Christ on earth. What the apostles and all the men of God since then have done, is to be referred to the continued operation of Christ. As Christ has come in the flesh, so henceforth He comes in the Spirit. This is the point of view in which the Bible and faith regard Church history; and whoever will understand, not merely the first part, but the whole, must also attend to the history of the working of Christ in His Church.

3. The doing and teaching of Jesus.—To view Jesus only as a teacher, is to divide Christ. Indeed, teaching was not even His first and chief business, but "He Himself first did what He taught, yea, He spent whole thirty years in the most exact practice of everything in which He would afterwards instruct mankind" (Brandt's Apostolic Pastor). "Christ preached His own life and lived His own doctrine" (Chubb). In the doings of Christ, to which belong also His sufferings, lies the pith of His doctrine; and in the ways of God in general, works and words, doing and teaching, are connected together,—elucidate and confirm each other.

4. The ascension of Jesus was His being taken up (ver. 2, *ἀνελήφθη*: comp. 1 Tim. iii. 16).—The Eastern Church called the festival of the Ascension *ἀνάληψις*, the day of His being taken up. The eternal Son of God is again taken up, and the Son of man is taken up to glory. The exalted One remains always the Son of man; in Him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and where Jesus according to His Godhead is essentially present, there will He be also according to His human nature. (See Gess on the Doctrine of Christ's Person.)

5. The observation that Jesus has given commandments to

His apostles through the Holy Ghost, touches on the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, in which the chief point—the mutual relation between God the Son and the Holy Ghost—still contains many perplexing questions.

6. Christ has shown Himself alive to the apostles.—This points to the importance of the resurrection of Jesus for faith in general. (See 1 Cor. xv.) *He lives!* this is the living truth, the punctum saliens of Christianity, the connecting and centre point of Christian faith, love, and hope.

7. The discourses of the risen Saviour concerning the kingdom of God.—The word is the light. With the word, the Lord during the last forty days has enlightened and prepared His disciples, that they might minister to us in the word. As the pilgrims to Emmaus felt their hearts burning within them when He opened to them the Scriptures, so the Lord even now kindles in the hearts of believers divine light and fire by means of the word.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

The former treatise (ver. 1). The first and chief point that a teacher has to handle is ever the Gospel of Christ—His person and His work (Apost. Past.).—*O Theophilus.* The true servants of God take the greatest possible care of all their flock. But if they find among their flock a Theophilus, a soul who sincerely seeks God and the Saviour, they are justified in nourishing him in a peculiar manner, and in seeking to instruct him in everything which pertains to a complete knowledge of salvation (The same).—*Concerning all that Jesus began.* A noble progress follows a noble commencement. Theophilus must often have asked himself the question, How does it happen that I am a Christian? How has the Gospel come even to Rome? Here Luke gives the answer: Jesus exalted to heaven has sent the Gospel even to Rome. As certainly and as surely as the first disciples, so belongs Theophilus, and so belong we Christians, to the Lord Christ. He who in the beginning has called His own, has also called us; for as He began both to do and to teach until the day that He was taken up, so He continues to do and to teach as Prophet, Priest, and King in His kingdom (Besser). It is not enough to begin well, we must persevere in goodness until the end (Starke).—*To do and to*

teach. Doctrine and life, word and action, the revelation and fulfilment of the divine will, went hand in hand with Jesus, the Teacher: like to whom is no teacher: what He taught, that He lived; what He commanded, that He did. Therefore He is not only the divine Master, at whose feet we should sit to hear the will of God; but also the divine Example, in whose footsteps we should walk to fulfil the will of God.—Every Christian should both do and teach, that is, be a Christian not only in words, but in deeds (Starke).

Until the day when He was taken up (ver. 2). The Spirit of God has as carefully instructed us in what pertains to Christ's state of exaltation as in what happened to Him in His state of humiliation, and has thus given us to understand that they do err who dwell only upon the latter (Apost. Past.).—The first treatise, the Gospel of Luke, proceeds from the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, and closes with the ascension, or His return to the Father; for with that His visible course, His doing and teaching on earth, is concluded, but not His working in the redeemed Church. The ascension is rather the condition and commencement of His coming in the Spirit, by which Jesus, exalted above all heavens, manifests continually His kingly might and grace; and therefore Luke begins the history of the apostles and the Church with the repetition of the narrative of the ascension (Leonhardi and Spiegelhauer). As everything that happens in the visible world has its origin in the invisible; as all the complicated threads of human history and earthly occurrences converge in the hand of the holy and almighty Regent of the world; so in a special manner the reins of the history of Christ's kingdom, of which the Acts of the Apostles relate the first and fairest part, are in the pierced hands of our blessed Lord and Saviour, exalted from the cross to the right hand of God.—*After He, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen.* Here already the apostles are introduced, with whose history this book is occupied. The Son did not return to the bosom of the Father until He had secured the progress of His work on earth, by leaving to His chosen apostles the command to preach the Gospel and the promise of the Holy Spirit. The choice, mission, and equipment of the apostles is an act of the prophetic wisdom, priestly love, and kingly sovereignty of our Lord, which cannot

be too highly estimated. What would have become of the kingdom of Christ after His departure, without these divinely authorized executors of His testament?—It is truly said that Christ was taken up amid the instructions and commands which He gave to His apostles. Thus He taught not only in life and death, but also at His ascension. Imperatorem oportet stantem mori et verum ecclesiæ Christianæ doctorem decet docentem vivere, mori, cœlos adscendere (Apost. Past.).—*Through the Holy Ghost He gave commandments.* What Christ through the Holy Ghost has taught, that must we through the Holy Ghost receive and learn (Starke).

To whom He showed Himself alive after His passion (ver. 3). Those who see and partake of the sufferings of Christ, see also and partake of His life (Starke).—It is an important part of the preaching of the Gospel, to be able rightly to testify both of the sufferings and death of Christ and of His life. The apostles must see and experience both. And the same is still the case with the messengers of the Gospel. If they are not crucified and dead with Christ, both by faith, through which all things have become theirs, and in the nailing of the old man to the cross of Christ, they know not His life (Apost. Past.).—Thousands in Israel saw His shameful sufferings on the cross; but that He who was dead according to the flesh, was made alive according to the Spirit, this was only manifested on earth to those who by faith were rendered susceptible for the Spirit, in whom Christ truly lives (Besser).—*Speaking with them of the kingdom of God.* So must teachers now seek to portray distinctly to souls the entire true form of the kingdom of Christ on earth, in order that they may occupy themselves therewith, and not retain any false image of it. If we discourse only to them of the glories of the kingdom, and of what refers to its blessedness, they will easily be led into error when the dark clouds arise, and that form of the kingdom of Christ appears which He has foretold to us in John xvi. and elsewhere (Apost. Past.).

On the whole section.—The divinity of the Bible proved from the remarkable union of opposite qualities in its books. 1. They are so individually, and yet so universally applicable. 2. They are so entirely incidental and temporary, and yet eternal and for every time (The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles written for Theophilus).—*The sufficiency of Scripture:* Not

everything after which man can ask, but everything which is necessary for salvation is contained therein.—Christ our Prophet: 1. In deeds, 2. in words.—The commands of Christ are spirit and life: 1. Because He Himself was anointed with the Holy Ghost; 2. because He has furnished those who obey Him with the Holy Ghost.—The essential union between God the Son and the Holy Ghost.—I live, and ye shall live also.—The grace and condescension of the risen Lord in His appearances during the forty days; inasmuch as, 1. He appeared often, and 2. gave the surest proofs that He lives.—*As regards the certainty, He lives!* 1. The foundation of faith; 2. the anchor of hope.—*The kingdom of Christ has the same course as the Lord:* 1. First the cross, 2. then the crown.—*The Gospel of the earthly life of Jesus, the first treatise.* 1. According to its widely comprehensive operation: as the germ of the succeeding developments of the kingdom of God on earth. 2. According to its joyful contents: as the message of salvation for fallen man. 3. According to its ancient origin: as the testimony of the true witnesses of the truth, resting on their own experience (as opposed to the negative assertions of a destructive criticism).—*The irrefragable testimony of Jesus Christ, the true Witness:* 1. By His deeds, and by His doctrine; 2. by His sufferings and death, and by His glorious exaltation; 3. by the mouth of His apostles, and by His personal work; 4. by the course of the history of the world and His kingdom, and by the internal experience of believers.—*The forty days between Easter and the Ascension,* in their sacred importance: 1. For the Lord, as the period of a Sabbath-rest after the completion of the work of redemption; of the last care of the Shepherd for His disciples; and of the joyful expectation of His approaching exaltation. 2. For the disciples, as the period of the last blessed intercourse with their glorified Master; of quiet communion with their own heart (Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?); and of earnest preparation for their apostolic mission to the world. 3. For us, as an emblem of the blessed life of faith with Christ in God, concealed from the world (Col. iii. 3); of the blessed work of love in the hearts of our friends in looking forward to our approaching separation; and of the expectation of hope of our heavenly perfection.

SECTION I.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH. (CHAP. I. 4–26.)

A.

The Ascension of Jesus, and His last Instructions, Commands, and Promises to the Apostles. (Mark xvi. 19; Luke xxiv. 49.)

CHAP. I. 4–11.

CONTENTS.—Last meeting of Jesus with His disciples; command to remain in Jerusalem; promise of the baptism of the Spirit; order to be witnesses of Jesus from Jerusalem to the end of the earth, without information as to the time of the appearance of the kingdom of God; the visible ascension of Christ, and the angels' testimony that He would come again in a visible form.

4 And when He came together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which (said He) ye have heard of Me. 5 For John baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not long after these days. 6 And when they were come together, they asked Him, and said, Lord, restorest Thou at this time the kingdom to the (people) Israel? 7 But He said to them, It is not your business to know the spaces and points of time which the Father has settled according to His own authority; 8 But ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost comes upon you, and ye shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. 9 And after He had spoken thus, He was taken up in a visible manner, and a cloud took Him away from their sight. 10 And as they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went away, behold, two men stood by them in white garments, 11 Who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing toward heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.

Ver. 4. Συναλιζόμενος is sufficiently attested by almost all Codd., as opposed to the reading συναλισκόμενος in Cod. D., or συναυλιζόμενος in Theodoret, which Griesbach has recommended.

Ver. 6. The simple ἠρώτων is with justice preferred by Lachmann, Tischendorf, and others, to the compound ἐπηρώτων, which in Cod. C. is a correction of the simple.

Ver. 8. Μου in A.B.C.D. and in the Sinaitic Codex is better attested

than μοι in E.—Ἐν with πάσῃ is not genuine: it is awanting in A. and D., and in C. it is added by a later hand.

Ver. 10. The plural ἐσθήσεσι λευκαῖς is to be preferred to the singular ἐσθῆτι λευκῇ. In Cod. C. the plur. is the original reading; the sing. is the correction by a later hand: so also the Sinait. Cod. has the plural.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. Luke indicates neither the time nor the place of this meeting. The place, we afterwards learn (ver. 12), was the Mount of Olives. The time is as little determined as the times of the other manifestations (Luke xxiv.); it is only from ver. 2 and following verses that it may be inferred that it was the fortieth day after the resurrection, provided that in vers. 4 and 6 one and the same meeting is meant. This Olshausen has called in question, because in the parallel passage (Luke xxiv. 49) the command to await in Jerusalem the baptism of the Spirit, was given before the last meeting. But there is not much in this; for in Luke xxiv. 49 the last words of Jesus are evidently given very briefly, and also by Olshausen's own showing, the parallels, Luke xxiv. 49 and Acts i. 4, do not perfectly correspond: moreover, ver. 6 leads naturally to the notion that the conversation is continued at one and the same meeting.

2. *Came together.*—The last coming together of Jesus with His apostles is distinguished from all those meetings which followed the resurrection by this, that Jesus would have all His apostles together. The word συναλιζόμενος does not, it is true, denote actively assembling, but rather being assembled or coming together; but, at all events, the full number of the apostles, and the importance of this assembly, at which Jesus was present with His disciples, are recognised, whilst concerning all the other appearances of the risen Saviour no similar expression is employed. The solemnity and importance of this coming together consisted not only in this, that it was the last meeting, and that the apostles then became witnesses of His glorious ascension, but also specially in this, that then the last will of Jesus to His disciples was declared.

3. *He commanded.*—The last command of our Lord to His apostles was, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait there for the gift of the Holy Ghost. This cost them self-denial; for, according to their natural feelings, they would without doubt, from fear of men, rather have avoided Jerusalem,

and on account of their painful recollections of the sufferings of their Lord, and of their own faithlessness and cowardice, have withdrawn from it. But it was the will of God that the law should go forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. ii. 3); that on this mountain of His holiness the foundation of His Messianic kingdom should be laid; that where the enmity of man against the Lord's Anointed broke forth most violently, there grace should show itself yet more mightily; and that through the outpouring of the Spirit, through the conversion of thousands, and through many miracles, the name of Christ should triumph most gloriously.

4. *The promise.*—With this, according to human feeling, severe and hard command, a promise was immediately joined, indeed, pre-eminently the Promise. For after the Redeemer promised to the fathers has come, the outpouring of the Spirit remains as the greatest promise next to be fulfilled. Jesus calls it "the promise of the Father," because God the Father, in the Old Covenant, had by His prophets promised the gift of the Spirit. (See Isa. xliv. 3; Joel iii. 1, etc.) He also reminds them of His own words (here the indirect form of speech changes suddenly into the direct); by which, however, cannot be meant Luke xxiv. 49, because there likewise the last discourse of Jesus with His disciples is related; but it rather refers, partly to such words as Luke xii. 11, and partly to the discourse in St John's Gospel (John xiv.): and this deserves particular notice, as being an implication of the knowledge of the discourses in John's Gospel in one of the synoptical writers. The promise of a full and complete baptism of the Spirit entirely agrees with a partial partaking of the Spirit, which was already experienced (Luke ix. 55; John xx. 22).

5. *Baptized with the Holy Ghost.*—The gift of the Spirit is here called a baptism; and by this it is designated as a gift in abundant fulness, and as an immersion in a purifying and vivifying element. The expression and image are taken from the baptism of John, not without reference to the testimony of the Baptist himself (Luke iii. 16). Only John predicted the baptism of the Spirit as an act of Christ, which here in the discourse of Jesus is not expressly stated; for that discourse treats not of the person from whom the baptism of the Spirit will proceed, but of the thing itself.

6. The indication of time, *not many days hence*, is wisely worded, in order that a joyful "hasting unto" and a believing "looking for" (2 Pet. iii. 12) should at the same time be called forth, and faith should be exercised.

7. The question of the united apostles (ver. 6) is occasioned by the words of Jesus Himself: first, in so far as they ask concerning the time, by Jesus mentioning the near approaching time of the baptism of the Spirit; and, secondly, in so far as they ask concerning the kingdom, by His repeated discourses since the resurrection cencerning the kingdom of God, and by the promise of the immediate outpouring of the Spirit,—a promise which the disciples connected with the idea of the Messianic kingdom, and that the more readily, because the resurrection of the Lord had anew raised the highest hopes in their hearts. They ask therefore: "Lord, wilt Thou *at this time* restore the kingdom to the people Israel?" The eager desire of patriotic souls, to whom the freedom, and greatness, and glory of their nation were dear, bursts out in this question, united to a pious hope of the fulfilment of all the divine promises made to the people of God. The kingdom which they expect is a kingdom of Israel, the theocratic kingdom realized in the Messiah, when the people of Israel, at present under the yoke, will be free, great, and glorious. And that the restoration of the kingdom was near, the apostles thought they might almost hope, after what the Lord had just spoken. That the meaning of the question is not, Wilt Thou restore the kingdom to the Jews who have crucified Thee (Lightfoot)? needs no remark.

8. *Not your business.*—This answer of the Lord, so greatly and so often misinterpreted, is at once divinely wise and humanly tender. It contains not so much of blame as of instruction. He does not question their right to ask, but only denies to them the privilege of knowing the times and the seasons which the Father by means of His peculiar sovereignty has fixed. The Son guards the royal prerogative, the divine reservation, the exclusive privilege of the Father. The distinction indicated by Jesus between χρόνοι and καιροὶ, periods and epochs, long times and short seasons, in which the deeds and ways of God come to pass, is very suggestive; and both, connected as they are together, are not made known to men, not even to the apostles: they may be inspired servants of God, and yet as little

know how to answer questions of time, relating to the development of the kingdom of God, as the prophets of the Old Testament (1 Pet. i. 11). Bengel, indeed, thinks from this, that though it did not belong to the apostles to know the times, yet it does not follow that it also belonged not to others in later times: the revelation of the divine economy has its degrees, and in the Apocalypse that was revealed which was then concealed from the apostles. But this distinguished man, in whom, in the estimation of many, a prophetic gift resided, has yet erred in his reckoning of the times and seasons out of the Apocalypse, and has thus given a memorable proof that the words of Christ still stand fast: "It belongs not to you to know the times or the seasons." So far, therefore, the Saviour has spoken only of the time, and this was the special point of inquiry with the apostles. The thing itself—the kingdom and its advent, and the prerogative of Israel in it—was not questioned by them. This the Lord has neither denied nor rejected; on the contrary, He has affirmed it, when He says that the Father has settled the times. A thing which shall never take place, has neither a time nor a season. Those then are entirely mistaken who maintain that Jesus has entirely rejected the notions of the apostles concerning the Messianic kingdom. He has by no means done so. Neither the prospect of the realization of His glorious kingdom on earth, nor the future which shall yet shine upon Israel, has Christ denied; He has only checked curiosity in regard to the time, and directed the apostles to their practical duties in the present.

9. *But ye shall receive strength.*—As regards the apostles, their true calling in the present, is the work for which they were to be endowed by the Holy Ghost coming upon them with power. They shall be witnesses: not simply, they ought to be witnesses, but they shall be; the guarantee for this consists in strength from above which is to them certain. They shall be witnesses of Jesus: their vocation is witness-bearing. Where? "In Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the end of the earth." In Jerusalem the apostles must remain and wait for the Holy Ghost; Jerusalem must first hear their testimony. But as a stone cast into water produces ever widening circles, so must the apostolic testimony of Jesus proceed from Jerusalem as from a centre, and by degrees fill ever widening circles, until it reaches the

uttermost parts of the earth. Ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς denotes not a land-boundary, not the limits of the Holy Land, but the limits of the whole earth. The Son of Man has a heart for the whole human race, although His people is nearest to His heart; and the salvation must go out from the Jews, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (John iv. 22; Isa. ii. 3). The universality of Christianity, the destination of the grace of Christ to all mankind, is to be reconciled both with the historical prerogative of Israel in the divine economy, and with the law of gradation and the necessity of an ordered progress. That ver. 8 is at the same time the theme of the whole book and the principle of its arrangement, we have already observed in the introductory paragraphs.

10. *After He had said this.*—Immediately after these words embracing the whole earth, the whole human race, and the entire course of Church history—words which as it were contemplate these things as from a heavenly perspective,—the ascension of Christ took place. Nowhere in the Scriptures are the circumstances of the ascension so exactly and distinctly represented as here. The description is divided into two parts: at first, the Lord is raised in a visible manner, the eyes of the apostles could follow Him for a time as He went up; then a cloud (probably a bright cloud, Matt. xvii. 5) coming down, received and removed Him from the sight of the disciples (ὑπέλαβεν).

11. *As they looked toward heaven.*—Their looks were directed stedfastly toward heaven, whilst the Lord, concealed from them by the cloud, went away and ascended; when already two men stood by them. Undoubtedly these were angels; for this is evident, first, from their sudden appearance—they were not seen coming; secondly, from their white and shining garments—a visible image of heavenly purity and holiness; and thirdly, from the information which they bring to the disciples—a message brought from heaven to earth. For not only was this to be a comforting and elevating vision, but the heavenly messengers were also commanded to proclaim a truth (οἱ καὶ εἶπον). This truth is twofold, expressed partly in the question, and partly in the promise. The question, Why stand ye gazing toward heaven? contains a mild reproof of the contemplative and inactive (ἑστήκατε) melancholy and longing, by which the disciples directed their looks and thoughts upwards toward heaven, as if they would, were it possible, hasten after their Lord, in order to remain with

Him; whilst their calling was not inactively to look after Him, but zealously and manfully to do His work on earth. The promise which the angels bring is the visible return of Jesus; and precisely this prospect must quicken every one who loves the appearance of the Lord to active diligence to please Him.

DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL REMARKS.

1. The promise of the Holy Spirit is the most important blessing which the Lord immediately before His ascension imparted to His disciples. The love of God the Father, and the grace and redemption of the Son, point to and are fulfilled in the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is in the inner life of the triune God the perfected unity; and the communication of the Holy Ghost is the acmé of divine revelation. When the eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us, this was a wonderful nearness of God to man; but the closest relation is the fellowship between God and man in the Holy Ghost. The incarnation is the union of God with the human race in the person of one Mediator: it is the new, holy, and higher beginning of humanity in the second Adam. The outpouring of the Spirit is the union of God directly with each individual soul who receives the Spirit. Fallen humanity requires first purity and freedom from sin and guilt, and secondly a new quickening and raising by God and to God. Christ, the God-man, made sin for us, has completed the work of atonement, taken upon Himself the sins of the world and carried them away. He is the way, the truth, and the life, through whom we come to the Father. But it is the Holy Ghost who imparts both purity and divine life to us. This is indicated in the idea of a baptism by the Spirit, which our Saviour mentions, referring to John's baptism of water; for as water performs a twofold operation on the body—it purifies or washes, and it refreshes, quickens, or enlivens: so has the baptism of the Holy Ghost a twofold operation—it purifies the soul, and pours into it life and strength from God.

2. The kingdom of God is one of the pervading fundamental truths of the word of God, especially of the New Testament. From the time that God created the world, and so long as He governs it, there exists a kingdom of God. But this kingdom has its seasons, its developments, its various forms. The apostles,

when they proposed the question to our Lord, had in their thoughts the kingdom of glory. Jesus has only exempted the question of time from their and our knowledge; but the thing itself He has not called in question. Not only the scriptures of the Old Testament, but also many weighty passages in the New, establish the fact that Israel has yet a future, and will yet enjoy a prerogative in the kingdom of God. But it is another question, whether we are able intelligibly and instructively to fix the manner, extent, and relation of this future prerogative of Israel. The manner in which Jesus deals with the question of the disciples, His significant silence, and His weighty declaration in the matter, do not encourage us. Not without design does He point them (and us) to the direct practical calling in the kingdom of grace, which is sufficiently holy, extensive, and honourable, namely, to be witnesses to the Lord even to the end of the earth. Certainly this calling is not to be fulfilled without many a hard fight. The kingdom of grace, according to divine appointment, passes often under the cross, and its motto is: To conquer by succumbing. Witness-bearing is, according to its nature, often a martyrdom; and both ideas are expressed in the same word (*μάρτυρες*). But precisely under the cross the kingdom of Christ flourishes best.

3. The ascension of Jesus is the glorious close of His earthly, and at the same time the glorious beginning of His heavenly life. In the event itself, there was something visible and something invisible. The gradual elevation of the Lord from the earth, until a cloud came and received Him out of their sight, was visible to the apostles then present. The ascension of the Lord into heaven, the true *ἀνάληψις* into the heavenly glory, was invisible. This was testified to the disciples by the angels, as also the Lord Himself had foretold it to them before His sufferings (John xiv.). Since His resurrection, Jesus during the forty days had appeared frequently to His disciples; but every time He vanished as suddenly, and as unobserved to their senses, as He appeared (Luke xxiv. 23). But at this time He granted to His assembled apostles a clear and calm view as He went towards heaven, to give them, as His eye-witnesses, as far as that was possible, absolute certainty that He belongs no more to earth, and dwells no more upon it; but that, after all things were accomplished, He has gone to His Father, from whom He

came. And, indeed, Jesus as man has gone to heaven; for He who met this last time with His disciples and ascended, is the same who died on the cross and rose from the grave.

4. The ascension and second advent of Christ are connected together. The message of the angels unites them in the closest manner. Christ will come again as the same who has gone to heaven. He who comes to judge the quick and the dead is the Son of man, the Crucified One, He who was wounded for us, He who was dead, but now lives for evermore (John v. 27; Rev. i. 18). The heavenly messengers testify to a threefold truth: He *will* come again—He will come *as the same*—He will come *in the same manner*, as He went, namely, visibly and in glory. But the time of the advent the angels have left untouched, even as Christ Himself has intimated that the times and the seasons are the royal secrets of the Father.

5. The interval between Christ's ascension and His second advent is the territory which contains the history of the apostles, and the whole of Church history. In this interval, the Lord reigns at the right hand of the Father, that is, in fellowship with the Father; but He also reigns in the midst of His enemies. The look of faith upward to the glory in which the Crucified is enthroned, and the look of hope forward to His advent, elevates and strengthens a believing heart.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

And when He came together with them (ver. 4.). Before Christ can use men in the ministerial office to gather others to Him, He first gathers them under the wings of His grace, that they may be warmed and constrained by His love to serve Him. Whosoever is not gathered to Christ, let him abstain from the ministerial office (Apost. Past.).—*He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise.* A true disciple departs not of his own accord from his post, but waits until the Lord bids him go, even though the multitude among whom he labours were like to Jerusalem, a den of murderers (The same).—Mark, O my soul, this weighty word: when Jesus calls thee, go; when He draws thee, run; when He stops thee, stand.—The bitterness of this command is lessened to the disciples by the gracious promise of Pentecost which is added to it. The law and the Gospel are bound together. The Gospel

makes the yoke of the law easy and light (Leonhardi and Spiegelhauer).—*To wait for the promise of the Father.* Before Pentecost, no one must run or preach, otherwise he runs in his own name, and the Lord says, I have not sent thee. There ought to precede every sermon a pentecostal rain, that it may be effectual and awakening (Gossner).—The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of adoption, is the promise of the Father (Besser).

For John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost (ver. 5). Now after Jesus, baptized with water and blood, had finished His work, can the prophecy of John be fulfilled: "He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Luke iii. 16) (Besser).—The more the Lord will use His servants, so much the greater measure of His Spirit does He impart to them. He had already bestowed upon His disciples the Holy Spirit (John xx. 22), but He now promises Him in a more abundant measure. The more eagerly we preserve and receive the Spirit, the more abundant will be the supply (Apost. Past.). —*Not many days hence.* Christ names in His kingdom neither day nor hour. He will that His people watch, pray, and wait. To wait is the school of the pious; but the "Not many days," "Yet a little while," "Behold I come quickly," strengthens their heart.

Lord, restorest Thou at this time the kingdom to Israel? (ver. 6). Although we know that the kingdom of Christ has always had its greatest power of increase under the cross, and afterwards broke forth so much the more gloriously, yet nevertheless we prefer rather to hear of its external splendour and glory, than of the persecution under which it has so beautifully flourished (Apost. Past.).—Moreover there is nothing of a carnal Jewish nature in these thoughts of the apostles. Just now they have heard that they, baptized by the Holy Ghost, would receive the promise of the Father: then the hope of Israel's complete redemption becomes mighty in them, the peace which they experience in their hearts must become the portion of their people, and the kingdom, whose eternal blessings they inwardly enjoy in spirit, must break forth in glorious manifestation (Besser).

It is not your business to know the times and the seasons; but ye shall receive power (vers. 7 and 8). There was something good in the question of the disciples: the longing after the

coming of the kingdom; the expectation of the great things which were now impending; the truth, that now, as the King of the kingdom had ascended His heavenly throne, this His kingdom would break forth on earth with power. What the Lord here rejects, is only the impatience which will know the time and the hour,—the curiosity which inquires after the how, the where, and the when of the kingdom,—instead of humbly commending its cause to the Lord, and simply doing their proper duty. That impatience the Lord kindly puts to rest with the word, "It is not your business to know;" and to this their duty He points with the encouraging promise, "But ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." Thus they themselves help forward the time and the hour for the Messiah's kingdom on earth.—There is no better remedy for distempered speculations than active work in spiritual and secular things. Thereby not only are these anxious and impatient questions forgotten, but we are assisted to their practical solution.—*And ye shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.* No territory is so waste and barren but the testimony will effect something, when the Lord sends one there who executes His command in the power of His Spirit (Apost. Past.).—Jerusalem, the place of the reception of the Spirit, was also to be the place where the witness of the Spirit commences; and in the land of promise was the promise, the fulness of spiritual blessing, to find its first native soil. Samaria, the missionary field white for the harvest (John iv. 35), our Lord mentions as the middle station between Judea and the land of the Gentiles: and the end of the earth, we would say, was Rome; for there all nations of the habitable earth were united in the capital of the world. We shall find that the order of the history of the apostles perfectly corresponds with this order of testimony (Besser).

He was taken up in a visible manner (ver. 9). Most Christians cleave with body and soul, with heart and hands, entirely to this present life, and strive so to have enough, that it interests them little or nothing that Christ has ascended on high. Therefore the Holy Ghost would check this feeling, and preaches: Christ remained not on earth, but ascended on high, in order that we, whilst we are here below in the body, may raise our hearts and thoughts to Him, and suffer not our

hearts to be burdened with the cares of this life. For thus ought it to be portioned out by Christians: the body and the old Adam ought to be occupied and to have to do with temporal things; but the heart should interest itself in eternal blessings; as St Paul says, "Seek ye those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God" (Luther). —Christ, ascended to heaven, is the real counsellor and actor in the midst of His Church, the true hero of the Acts of the Apostles (Besser).—*A cloud concealed Him from their sight.* A bodily cloud removed the bodily presence of Jesus; but there were soon to arise other clouds, of which Isaiah speaks: "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness" (Isa. xlv. 8). By a cloud of witnesses was the spiritual rain to be poured forth upon the parched earth (Apost. Past.).—Thus, then, the clouds over and around us are the visible witnesses of the invisible Saviour—the light curtain which conceals the eternal High Priest from our bodily eyes; but as certainly as the clouds are not only above us but around us, so certainly is He who is enthroned behind the clouds ever around His people (Williger).

And as they looked stedfastly to heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white garments (ver. 10). Thus ought the servants of Jesus, in all their doings, designs, fights, and sufferings, to have their eyes and heart directed to Him. The look of Jesus will meet our look: He who is exalted on high looks down upon the lowly. How faithful a Saviour! Scarcely was He away from His disciples, when He sends two heavenly messengers to strengthen them. This was likewise the earnest of the fulfilment of His great promise to send the Spirit (Apost. Past.).—The two men in shining garments and the men of Galilee, unknown and despised on earth, but well known and named with honour in heaven for the sake of the Galilean, here meet together: a Mahanaim, an encampment of angels and men, is pitched on earth—the Church of Christ (Besser).

Ye men of Galilee (ver. 11). Since Jesus the Galilean occupied the throne at the right hand of God, no higher title of honour than this could be given to the disciples (Leonh. and Spiegel.).—*Why stand ye gazing toward heaven?* This reminds us of the angelic Easter sermon, Why seek ye the living

among the dead? (Besser).—Believing delectation in the glory of Christ (as well as painful longing after going home to Him) ought not, with His servants, to induce any cessation or forgetfulness of their office and calling. The joy of the Lord should be their strength for work (Apost. Past.).—Jesus has with His ascension prepared the way for our following to heaven (Starke). —*This Jesus will come.* "Occupy till I come" (Luke xix. 13). This charge His servants, entrusted with spiritual talents, have to fulfil. "He will come:" this and nothing else the angels say for the comfort of hope to the apostles; and the Church in the second article of the creed confesses this hope (Besser). —Yes, He will come, as He went to heaven; and His glorified wounds, the tokens of His humiliation, will on that day sparkle both to His people and to the world: to His people for comfort, that their Saviour has effected an eternal redemption; but to unbelievers and to all the enemies of the cross for terror, for they will look upon Him whom they have pierced, and all the kindreds of the earth will mourn (Leonhardi and Spiegelhauer).

On the whole section.—The waiting of the righteous. 1. An exercise of patience. 2. A work of faith. 3. An occupation which will be converted into joy: Prov. x. 28 (Lechler).—*Not to depart from Jerusalem.* The witness-bearing of all true servants of Jesus, especially in evil times: it contains, 1. a severe task; but also, 2. a great promise.—*The gift of the Holy Ghost*, a baptism with the Spirit: inasmuch as the Holy Ghost, 1. purifies the soul, as water the body; and 2. refreshes and strengthens the soul, as the bath the body (Lechler).—*Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom?* A question which in our days presses itself upon the disciples of Jesus. 1. It is authorized, as a question of strong faith which expects the kingdom; of tender love which wishes the salvation of the world; and of holy grief which feels for the miseries of the times. 2. It is unauthorized, as a question of carnal impatience which wishes to see the kingdom of God coming with external show; of spiritual curiosity which will pry into what the Father has reserved for Himself; and of pious indolence which, with folded hands, looks at the clouds, instead of working for the kingdom of God in the calling entrusted to it.—*The true remedy against spiritual curiosity.* 1. Humble waiting on the hour of the Lord. 2. Joyful working in our respective callings.—*The kingdom of*

God in its different forms. 1. At the cross. 2. In glory.—*Christ our King.* 1. Formerly, with the crown of thorns; 2. hereafter, with the crown of glory (Lechler).—Fidelity in small things the way to greatness in the kingdom of heaven.—*Christianity is a witness-bearing.* It demands, 1. experience; 2. certainty of what a man believes; 3. veracity; 4. fidelity and constancy (Lechler).—*Ye shall be My witnesses.* Herein is our vocation comprised: 1. With its glory—witnesses of the exalted King; 2. with its lowliness—only His witnesses, nothing of and for ourselves; 3. with its sufferings—witnesses of the Lord in a hostile world; 4. with its promises—strength from above.—*The power of the Holy Ghost.* 1. How absolutely we require it. 2. How we receive it (Lechler).—*The ascension of Jesus.* 1. As the glorification of Jesus; 2. as the glorification of humanity; 3. as the glorification of the whole earth (Kapff).—*How do we now see the Lord ascending?* 1. With heartfelt thanks for His gifts and promises which He has left us; 2. with joyful wonder at the glory of His departure; 3. with pious expectation of His second coming which He has promised (Westermeyer).—*How ought we to look after our ascended Saviour?* 1. By diligent searching of His word; 2. by earnest seeking of that which is above; 3. by earnest longing that He may draw us to Himself (Starke).—*Whither does the ascension of our Lord direct our look?* 1. To His finished work, whose blessing we should spread and propagate; 2. to heaven, where He has ascended and prepared for us a place; 3. to His advent to judgment, which we should expect with earnest and quiet mind (Langbein).—*The fruits of the ascension of our Lord.* He has gone to heaven, that we may have our conversation in heaven; that we may have peace on earth; that we may receive grace to follow after Him.—*The promises of the departing Redeemer.* 1. "Behold, I am with you always." He is with us in the Scriptures, in our holiest feelings, and in the form of those who bear His image. 2. "This Jesus will come again." Even now, He is already come again to judgment; because by Him the good and the bad are (*a*) made manifest, (*b*) separated, and (*c*) assigned to their respective places (Schleiermacher).

B.

Return of the Apostles to Jerusalem, their continued and intimate Fellowship with each other, the Completion of the Apostolic Number by the Appointment of Matthias to the Apostleship.

Chap. i. 12–26.

Contents.—The apostles, on their return from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, remain together, continuing in prayer along with the believing women and the brethren of Jesus. In those days Peter stands up in the midst of the assembled disciples, and proposes the appointment of a witness of the resurrection of Jesus in the place of the traitor Judas, who by his transgression fell. Two are chosen, and after prayer to the Lord, the lot is cast, by which Matthias is added to the eleven.

12 Then returned they to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, being distant from it a Sabbath-day's journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went to an upper room, where abode Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas (the brother) of James. 14 These all waited with one accord, in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brethren. 15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said (the number of the persons together were about a hundred and twenty): 16 Men and brethren, this scripture must be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spoke before concerning Judas, who was guide to those who took Jesus. 17 For he was numbered among us, and had received the lot of this ministry. 18 Now this man purchased a piece of land with the reward of unrighteousness, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And this was known to all that dwell in Jerusalem; so that that piece of land is called in their tongue Aceldama, that is, The field of blood. 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein;" and, "His bishoprick let another take." 21 Wherefore, must there now one of those men who have been all the time with us, that the Lord Jesus went out and in among us, 22 From the baptism of John until the day when He was taken up from us, become a witness of His resurrection. 23 And they placed two, Joseph called Barsabas, surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which of these two Thou hast chosen, 25 That he may receive the lot of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas departed, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they cast forth the lot over them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *From the mount.*—Here the locality of the ascension of Jesus is evidently pointed out: it took place at the Mount of Olives. The narrator, indeed, supposes his reader already acquainted with the place where the Lord ascended; but as he expressly says that the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, he sufficiently marks the locality. Luke only mentions the position of the mountain and its approximate distance from the holy city,[1] because Theophilus knew not the Holy Land from personal observation. Yet here the distance from the city of the particular spot of the mountain where the ascension took place is not stated, but only the distance of the mountain in general. Though Luke in his Gospel (Luke xxiv. 30) wrote that Jesus led His disciples out of the city ἕως εἰς *Βηθανίαν*, even to Bethany, yet there is here no contradiction to our passage, as some—for example, De Wette—have affirmed. It is neither said in the Gospel that the ascension took place in the immediate neighbourhood of Bethany, nor is it affirmed in our passage that Jesus was so near the city of Jerusalem as the distance of a Sabbath-day's journey when He was taken up; but in the Gospel only this much is said, that the event took place on the way to Bethany, which lay at the eastern declivity of the mountain, and in the Acts, that it took place in the region of the Mount of Olives. Even Strauss admits that there is no contradiction between these two statements. Bethany lay fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, and a Sabbath-day's journey is estimated only at six furlongs; so that the proper place of the ascension must be sought for between these two extreme points. (See Robinson's Palestine.)

2. *They went into an upper room.*—When the apostles returned to the city, they did not disperse, but remained together with one accord, and earnestly prepared themselves by prayer and supplication for the promised outpouring of the Spirit. For this purpose they went into an upper room, that is a room in the uppermost story immediately below the flat roof, where, undisturbed and separated from the bustle of the world, they might devote themselves to their holy employments. We are not to

[1] A Sabbath-day's journey; that is, 2000 cubits, or 4000 feet, according to the rabbinical rules for the measurement of a walk on the Sabbath.

seek this upper room in the temple, as some of the fathers thought, but in a private house, whose owner was attached to Jesus: for the statement in the Gospel, that the disciples after the ascension were continually in the temple (Luke xxiv. 53), does not oblige us to think here of the temple, and still less, as Strauss and others maintain, that these passages contradict each other. In the Gospel, from the nature of the case, it can only be meant, that at the time when the people were accustomed to visit the temple, that is, at the usual hours of prayer, the apostles were also accustomed to repair thither; and in our passage, it is stated that at other times they continued in the above-named chamber.—The enumeration of the eleven apostles is designed to place, at the beginning of the book, those persons in the foreground who formed the centre of the Church of Christ, and to whom first of all the promise of the Spirit was imparted. They all remained together with one accord; and unanimity imparts strength. Yet they thought not that they were strong; on the contrary, they felt their weakness and poverty, and implored with earnest supplication for the strength of the Spirit which was promised to them. Meanwhile the apostles were far from isolating themselves in a spirit of official pride, and separating themselves from others; on the contrary, they united in prayer and supplication with all those who believed on Jesus. There are here three classes of believers to be distinguished, exclusive of the apostles: 1. The women who followed Jesus, and part of whom had accompanied Him from Galilee to Jerusalem (Luke xxiii. 49); among these, only Mary the mother of Jesus is expressly named, and that too for the last time. 2. The brethren of Jesus, who at an early period were not for but against Him (John vii. 5), but who now undoubtedly believed on Him. It is worthy of remark, that here, on the one hand, the brethren of Jesus are expressly distinguished from the eleven apostles, and, on the other hand, are unmistakeably placed in connection with the mother of Jesus: by which it is evident, first, that the real brethren and not the mere cousins of our Lord are meant; and secondly, that none of them were likewise apostles. 3. The other disciples of the Lord: see the following note.

3. *About a hundred and twenty.*—Together with the apostles, the women, and the brethren of Jesus, the disciples—that is, the

collection of those who acknowledged Jesus as their Lord, and rendered obedience to Him—formed a yet more extensive class. There took place then, "in those days," that is, during the ten days intervening between the ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit, an assembly of about a hundred and twenty persons, among whom are to be numbered the apostles, the brethren of Jesus, and the other disciples, the latter naturally being the majority.—This statement of the number has been found fault with as incorrect and unhistorical; and that on the ground that it is irreconcilable with the statement of Paul, that Christ after His resurrection appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6 (Baur's Paulus, p. 57; Zeller's Acts of the Apostles, p. 117). But there is not the slightest contradiction between these two statements, inasmuch as: 1. Luke, in our passage, by no means intends to say how great at that time was the whole number of the disciples in all the land, but only how many persons were present at this assembly in Jerusalem, at which the appointment of a successor for the traitor Judas among the apostles was discussed. 2. Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 6, has not mentioned the place where Jesus appeared to the five hundred disciples: it is very possible that that appearance took place in Galilee, where the majority of the disciples of Jesus lived, whilst in Jerusalem only a few dwelt, and even the apostles themselves remained in the city only in consequence of the express command of the Lord. (See Lechler's Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times, 2d edition, p. 275.)

4. *But in those days.*—Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and made a statement and proposal to the assembly. We see here that he is "the mouth of the apostles, and the head of their choir," as Chrysostom calls him. He is also placed at the head of the list of the apostles. Yet he does not so understand his primacy, as that he should take upon himself the right to fill up the vacant apostolic office, in virtue of his supremacy. Not even all the apostles, by themselves, believe that they had the power to complete, through their own choice, their number, and to fill up the vacancy in their circle. But the apostles, and Peter in their name, bring this affair of their office and ministry before the collected disciples, in order that the whole Church may consider, determine, and act. This accordingly took place; for it is evident from the context that those who appointed Bar-

sabas and Matthias, prayed over them, and at length cast the lot, are not the apostles only, but the whole of the disciples.—How entirely differently does Peter here act from his pretended successor at Rome! How he permits the congregation of believers to act even before they had received the gift of the Spirit!

5. *Concerning Judas.*—The statement of Peter embraces two closely connected points: 1. The death of an apostle (vers. 16–20); 2. the required appointment of another in his place (vers. 20–22). Both points he places in the light of the word of God. That an apostle of the Lord should sink so deeply as to point out the way to those who took Jesus, and that he should die such a horrible death, must awaken such serious reflections, and could so easily become a stumblingblock, that it was of great consequence to place the matter in its true light. And this Peter does when he says, It must needs come to pass; it has not happened by chance; it is only the fulfilment of the prophecies which the Scriptures contain: for David has, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, prophesied of Judas, and of the desolation of his dwelling, and of the possession of his place by another. In the 109th Psalm (which was called in the ancient Church the "Iscariot"), and in the 69th, David, the Old Testament type of the Redeemer, has poured out his heart over the bitter experiences which he must endure, and in particular has uttered frightful imprecations against the enemies who treated the anointed of the Lord without pity. For example: "Let their habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell in their tents," Ps. lxix. 25. "Let his days be few, and let another take his office," Ps. cix. 8. And as Jesus was the antitype of the much persecuted pious king; so was Judas the antitype of those former enemies of God and His anointed, and in him then must the curse and imprecation be fulfilled. Convinced that these words of the Psalm were fulfilled in Judas, Peter changes (with a free rendering of the words of Ps. lxix.) the plural into the singular, without however intending to maintain that David personally thought with clear consciousness on none other than Judas and his apostolic office; for Peter says not, David has spoken of Judas, but, the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David has prophesied of Judas. And this entirely agrees with the notion that David in those Psalms has expressed his own sufferings, and meant his

own enemies whom he well knew; but that, inspired by the Holy Ghost, he has expressed thoughts and words which find in reality their fullest accomplishment in the fate of the Redeemer, and in particular, in the accursed traitor, of whose horrible end and ejection from his office, every earlier deposition from office was but a feeble type.

6. *He was numbered among us.*—In order to point out that the prophecies were actually fulfilled in Judas, Peter mentions his formally belonging to the apostles (without which the prediction could not apply to him), and his possession which was rendered desolate by his horrible death. The first he shows by the circumstance that Judas was formally numbered among the twelve, and received the ministry, that is, the apostolate, as the part belonging to him. What Peter then says (for he, and not Luke in his own person, speaks in what follows) of the possession of Judas and of his end, appears so clear, that, if we had not the parallel narrative of Matthew (Matt. xxvii. 5), we would not have supposed that Judas committed suicide by hanging, and that the field of blood was purchased after his death. The words of our passage do certainly lead rather to the notion, that Judas himself completed the purchase of the field, and afterwards perished by a precipitous fall. Nevertheless there is no necessary and adequate reason to maintain a contradiction between these two passages, and to read them as two entirely diverging traditions. For, as regards the purchase, it is very probable that Peter has expressed himself rhetorically, as if Judas had himself acquired the field, when it was only purchased after his death, but yet with the reward of his treason. And it is acknowledged that his fall headlong (πρηνής), by which his bowels burst, admits of being reconciled with the suicide by hanging attested by Matthew. The expression, "Judas has gone to his own place," is intentionally veiled in significant and awful obscurity, but it points to no other than the place of condemnation and eternal perdition.

7. *So must now.*—As it is now evident that the place formerly conferred on Judas, and his office, is vacated in virtue of the fulfilment of these prophecies; so must the vacancy be filled up, and the number of the twelve completed. One of those men who have been with them the whole time, from the commencement of John's ministry until the day of the ascension of the Lord,

so long as Jesus stood in close connection with His disciples, must become a witness of the resurrection of Jesus, along with the eleven. Peter names only one requisite in those who were fitted for the apostolic office, namely, constant intercourse between them and the disciples during the ministry of the Lord. And this chiefly, because the person to be chosen was to be a witness of Jesus, and therefore must possess, as an eye-witness and ear-witness, personal and direct acquaintance with the person and whole life and work of Jesus. Moreover, this requisite brought forward by Peter is not merely external, as certainly appears at first sight; for the constancy of a man who, from the beginning of the public life of Jesus to His ascension, had always attached himself to Him and His disciples, was undeniably an internal sign, and manifested a character of fidelity and stedfastness, in virtue of which a special office in the kingdom of God might with confidence be entrusted to him, so far as this depended on man. He who so long and so faithfully had continued with Jesus, and had united himself to His disciples, was tried on the side of his disposition, and must indisputably have also gathered internal experience by the teaching and influence of Jesus.

8. *And they appointed two.*—The choice of the twelfth apostle instead of Judas is divided into a human and a divine act. The whole hundred and twenty believers effect the former. They were convinced by the speech of Peter that the place of Judas ought to be filled up; and also they assented to the view, that he who should be chosen must from the beginning have attached himself to Jesus and His disciples. Accordingly the assembly then proceed; but they proceed only so far as to elect, out of the number of those qualified, two men, and place them in the midst (for both were present among the number of the hundred and twenty). Thus the assembly make, so to speak, a choice of two: and this they were able to do, inasmuch as the requisite named by Peter, and approved by the whole, could be known easily and without fail. The two persons are not further known to us either in the Bible or in history: neither Matthias who forthwith became an apostle, nor Joseph the son of Seba, surnamed the Just. That the latter is the same with Joses Barnabas, is a supposition without foundation, especially as Luke in Acts iv. 36 does not refer to this passage, but mentions Barnabas as if for

the first time. The assembly thought they durst not go further, but that they ought to leave to the Lord the final determination of the one who should become the apostle. Therefore they invoked in prayer (which, without doubt, Peter likewise, as the spokesman of the disciples, uttered) the Lord Himself, who knows all hearts, to give them a token which of the two He would choose. Interpreters are not agreed whether this prayer was addressed to God the Father, or to the exalted Lord Jesus. For the former opinion, Meyer appeals to Acts xv. 7, where Peter directly predicates of God both καρδιογνώστης and ἐξελέξατο διὰ τοῦ στόματός μου ἀκοῦσαι τὰ ἔθνη, etc. But in that passage the question is not about the choice of an apostle. For the invocation of Jesus, on the other hand, speaks: 1. The circumstance that in ver. 21 Jesus is directly called ὁ κύριος to whom in ver. 20 αὐτοῦ refers, and therefore nothing is more natural than that κύριε in ver. 24 should likewise refer to Jesus. 2. Because he who was to be appointed was to be an apostle of Jesus, and therefore must be chosen by Jesus. 3. As the Lord Jesus on earth had Himself chosen His apostles (ver. 2, τοῖς ἀποστόλοις—οὓς ἐξελέξατο, compare ver. 24, ἐξελέξω), so has He also directly, though now exalted to heaven, chosen Matthias to be an apostle, and at a later period Saul (Acts ix. 15, 17). If we compare also the corresponding expressions in vers. 17 and 25, we will receive the impression, that as Judas by the choice of Jesus had received the lot of the apostleship, so one of the two appointed disciples will receive the lot of the same office by the choice of Christ.

9. *They cast forth the lot.*—The decision by lot took place according to an Old Testament custom. Tablets (not, as some suppose, dice), on which the names of Joseph and Matthias were written, being placed in a vessel, and that lot which, on the shaking of the vessel, first fell out (ἔπεσεν), gave the decision. This custom is most clearly illustrated in 1 Chron. xxiv. 5 and xxv. 8. In the Old Testament, the lot was cast over the two goats at the yearly festival of the atonement, Lev. xvi. 8; and Moses commanded the land of Canaan to be divided by lot (Num. xxxiv. 13), which took place under Joshua (Josh. xiv. 2, xviii. 2). In particular, this division of the land among the tribes of Israel by lot, occurred as an example to the apostles: the office of the apostleship was, as it were, the inheritance which

one obtained—his lot which fell to him (κλῆροι, vers. 17, 25). But the apostles and the assembly of believers proceeded only to the lot after they themselves had determined according to the best of their knowledge and conscience, so far as with good reason the human choice could go. Only the last word, which required a look into the heart, they request of the Lord by the lot. And this so much the more, as they had not yet received the outpouring of the Spirit, whilst afterwards no application to the lot occurs. If we attend to all this, no kind of abuse of the lot can be grounded or excused by this example.

10. *And the lot fell on Matthias.*—The transaction itself, that is to say, the filling up of the place of Judas in the apostolic circle by Matthias, has been censured as rash, and contrary to the will of God; for Paul was already fixed upon to supply the place of Judas, although called at a later period. (So of late, Stier's Words of the Apostles, vol. i. p. 15). But this opinion is entirely unfounded. We find no indication by which God has made known His displeasure at the choice; for that we hear nothing of the deeds of Matthias, proves as little that he was not a true and genuine apostle, according to the will of God, as the like circumstance shows with regard to the true apostolic standing of many of the twelve. And as regards Paul, the above opinion is likewise erroneous. For Paul never gave himself out as one of the twelve: on the contrary, he distinguishes himself from them (1 Cor. xv. 5); he belonged not to them; for he was, in virtue of his calling, the apostle of the Gentiles, and so stands to the twelve—the apostles of the Jews (Gal. ii. 9); or, as Lange puts it, the Apostle of Progress, as contrasted with the Apostles of the Foundation.

DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The fulfilment of Scripture is the thread which runs through the proposition of Peter. In the light of the fulfilment of Scripture he regards the fate of Judas, and the necessity of again restoring his place among the apostles. He thus interprets Scripture, without doubt, on the ground of the hints which Jesus Himself had given. And in this the apostle was perfectly right. For Christ is the essence and end of the Old Covenant. The holiest idea of believing life, divine trust, and expectation in the righteous of the Old Covenant, pointed to Christ, often un-

consciously; and also the bitterest experiences and feelings of endured contempt, grief, and persecution, which befell the servants of God under the Old Covenant, were shadows and images of the sufferings of the Redeemer: and what a David has expressed, from faith in God's faithfulness, and in His righteous retribution upon the enemies of God and of his person, must receive its fulfilment in the apostate betrayer of the Lord. Although David thought not of this, yet the Spirit of Christ which was in him testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. i. 11).

2. Peter states the essence of the apostolic office to consist in this, that the apostles should be witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. This was the decisive act of God. By the resurrection of Jesus, His person is accredited and His work crowned. By the resurrection of the Lord, the faith of Christians is established. This was not only for the first disciples the chief fact of salvation, but it is so for all believers. What were the incarnation and the crucifixion, without this resurrection from the dead? Even now it depends on the resurrection of Jesus whether a man, in the main point, remains in unbelief or does homage to the faith. He who cannot attain to a belief in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, does not yet possess the true knowledge of the Son of God, for he knows not the living Christ.

3. Whilst Peter requires that he who was to be chosen must have been with the other disciples in company with Jesus from the baptism of John to the ascension, he limits the indispensable acquaintance of the life of Jesus, which an apostle must have, to the period of His public ministry. Although certainly the thirty years which Jesus spent in retirement have contributed to the work of our redemption, yet it is the life, work, and sufferings of our Lord during the three years of His ministry upon which our faith in Him must be founded. It perfectly agrees with this, that the Evangelists have chiefly limited themselves to this period, and have transmitted but little of the childhood of Christ.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

They returned to Jerusalem (ver. 12). As formerly the Lord returned from Tabor, the mount of transfiguration, on which

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Peter would willingly have built tabernacles, to the scene of His sufferings and death; so must the disciples return even from the open gate of heaven to the hostile city, where they are first to bear witness; and so must the Christian return from the heights of holy contemplation to his earthly contests and works.—*From the mount which is called Olivet.* Not far from the Mount of Olives our Saviour endured His most painful internal agony, and from that mount He ascends victoriously to heaven. So nearly also in the servants of Christ are sufferings and glory associated: their fields of battle become their fields of victory.—*Which lies near Jerusalem, about a Sabbath-day's journey.* With the neighbourhood of the Mount of Olives, which was so near that it might be visited, according to Jewish rules, on a Sabbath-day, even Jerusalem became endurable and comfortable to the disciples (Williger).—Even for the Christian, wherever he dwells, it is not more than a Sabbath-day's journey to Olivet. There he may go daily in spirit, and especially on the quiet hours of the Sabbath.

All these waited with one accord (ver. 14). A memorable period was these ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost, between the departure of the Lord according to the flesh and His coming again in the Spirit! A period which bore a resemblance to the days between the death and the resurrection of the Lord. And yet how entirely different! how much more comforted were the disciples now met together! They were indeed a flock without a shepherd, but no longer disconsolate as before; they bewail their Lord no more as one dead; they know that He lives, that He is enthroned in heaven, that He is with them always, even to the end of the world. They are again together in quiet separation from the world, but no longer with shut doors for fear of the Jews, as sheep press together when the wolf is near, but in quiet expectation and hope, as little children sitting together on a Christmas eve in a dark room, whilst in the next room the Christmas presents are preparing; for it was again the time of advent,—a time of holy waiting on the advent of the Lord in the Spirit.—What a variety of natures and dispositions, of gifts and graces, are represented in these eleven apostolic names, from Peter and John, to Judas the brother of James! But all these different natures are sanctified and ennobled by the grace of Him who can make some-

thing of every one to the praise of His glory; all these so much contrasted temperaments are tempered in love, and are heartily united with brotherly affection under one Lord, of whom it is said: He is the Head, and we the members; He is the Light, and we the shining; He is the Master, and we the brethren; He is ours, and we are His.—*Together with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus.* How ripened and purified must this mother of sorrows, yet blessed among women, have been, after all she experienced since the angel's salutation! With what tender love and reverent respect would all, not only John to whom the Lord on the cross entrusted this precious gift, regard this mother of the Lord, and do all they could for her comfort! And yet how modestly does she here appear, where her name occurs in Scripture for the last time: named as the last in the circle of the disciples, not the first; praying with others, not for them; a handmaid of God, not the queen of heaven!—*And His brethren.* Even they who formerly had not believed in the divinity of Jesus, and had remained at a distance from His kingdom, now bowed before the Crucified and Risen One, as the brethren of Joseph bowed before their exalted brother.

And in those days Peter stood up (ver. 15). He who had fallen so deeply, who had denied His Lord, yet feels in himself holy courage to speak before all the brethren of the treason of Judas and his miserable end. For he was conscious of the forgiveness of his sin, and the word of the Lord moved him, "After thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."—How my heart leaps with joy when I contemplate Peter! For although I am a poor sinner, yet Peter is a poor sinner; and if I were to paint Peter, I would inscribe on every hair of his head these words: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Peter, thou hast been saved; so also will I be saved (Luther).—He who always searches the more deeply into the night and multitude of his sins, and becomes thereby always the more certain that all are abolished by the blood of Christ, will, like Peter, stand up, and allow no time or opportunity to pass where something may be done to the praise of the glorious grace of his Mediator, the Reconciler (Apost. Past.).

Concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus (vers. 16–20). Peter speaks with the greatest earnestness and decided frankness of the great sin and miserable end of Judas,

and yet also with pious grief and mild forbearance. Seriously and frankly he speaks of the treason and suicide of his fellow-disciple, by which he had brought shame upon himself and his brethren. There is here nothing of the impure cloaking of the truth, by which in such sad cases we seek to cover the circumstances of the affair, to deceive men, and to preserve the appearance of honour: nothing of apostolic or priestly pride of office, which would allow no stain on the bearer of the holy office to come before the world, as if they were exempt from worldly judgment, and raised above human censures. On the contrary, with holy severity Peter recalls the judgment of God on this miserable man, and shows how even this painful history must redound to the honour of the one living and true God, whose judgment has thereby appeared in majesty, and whose prophecy has thereby been remarkably fulfilled; and he exhibits Judas as a warning of the deceitfulness of sin for all ages. And yet also there is a tone of mild forbearance and tender sorrow with which Peter speaks of this lost child. There is nothing of harsh judging, that one hears so often in such cases: Peter leaves judgment to God. There is nothing of that haughty self-conceit with which Christians so often look down upon an unfortunate suicide; but a holy mourning over a lost soul. With forbearance Peter speaks of Judas' treason: "He was guide to them who took Jesus." With forbearance he indicates his fate: "He has gone to his own place." So ought we at every history of others' sins to think on our own weakness, and apply the word of Nathan to ourselves, "Thou art the man!"

So must there now one of these (vers. 21, 22). This *must* refers not only to the necessity that the place of Judas should again be filled up, but also to the qualifications of the persons who in the proposal annexed should be brought forward. The thoughtless delusion, that it is very well if a teacher possess the qualities required in Scripture, but yet they are not so directly necessary as that one may not be a watchful shepherd without them, is thrown to the ground by this divine *oportet* (Apost. Past.).—*One of those who have been with us all the time.* Two qualifications are here mentioned: a measure of Christian knowledge—he must be one who is acquainted with the person and earthly life of Jesus from his own personal knowledge; and a

measure of Christian faithfulness—he must be one who has remained all the time true to Jesus, without going back or being offended at Him. Both of these are even now the qualifications which belong to the ministerial office: a living acquaintance with the Lord, and a heartfelt cleaving to Him.—*A witness of His resurrection.* The testimony of the resurrection of Jesus includes everything else in it—His death, His life, and His doctrine; for we cannot speak of the resurrection without referring to these. And, further, this testimony is the crown and head of every sermon of Jesus; for, however glorious His doctrine, however holy His life, however affecting His passion, and however great His death, He is only through His resurrection declared to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

And they appointed two (ver. 23). Both had the qualifications mentioned by Peter. Let the choice fall as it may, yet the Church was well provided. But it may be called a tempting of God when incapable persons are brought forward under the pretext: God will know so to direct it, that he who pleases Him best will be preferred (Apost. Past.).—What a harmony in this choosing of a bishop! The office leads them to self-denying humility: the Church follows in willing obedience, and presents two from the midst of them to the Lord, leaving it to Him, the only Patron of His Church, to choose whom He would for an offering for the augmentation of His kingdom (Leonh. and Spieg.).

And they prayed and said (vers. 24, 25). Teachers obtained by prayer, and teachers introduced into their office by prayer, are teachers full of blessing, particularly if they continue in prayer to the end (Apost. Past.).—*Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men.* It is delightful to observe the intimate and personal intercourse which the disciples hold with their exalted Lord, undisturbed by the thought that they see Him no more with their eyes. The election of the twelfth apostle was to be the first work which they on earth and He in heaven performed together in the Holy Ghost (Besser).—The Lord, who knows the hearts of all men, is a description of our God and Saviour which ministers ought never to forget. We may minister in the sight of men, and be blazed abroad as excellent men, but the Lord looketh at the heart (Apost. Past.).

And they cast forth the lot (ver. 26). The prayer of the disciples, "Thou, Lord, knowest the hearts of all men, show whom Thou hast chosen," was by the casting of the lot to become fact and reality. They put the sign into the Lord's hand that He might manifest His will to them, and that, as He Himself called and chose the other apostles in Galilee, so He might call and choose the twelfth apostle in place of Judas. Recourse is not again had to the lot (peculiar to the Old Covenant, particularly the division of the promised land among the twelve tribes (Num. xxvi. 55), who were indeed to be represented by the twelve apostles) in the Scriptures after Pentecost; because when the fulness of the Spirit was poured forth upon the Church, they were led by Him into all truth. That truth is now for us the revealed word of the Old and New Testament. If we let the word of God be a light unto our feet and a lamp unto our path, we shall not grope in darkness: if we observe with humility the leadings of the Lord and commit our ways to Him in prayer, He will certainly lead us in the right way, and direct us by His Spirit upon an even path (Leonhard and Spieg.).

On the whole section.—Prayer the weapon of the Church (Starke).—Judas an example how deeply a man, with whom there was a good beginning, may fall, if he only surrender himself to a single sin.—*What teacher is fit and qualified for the sacred office?* 1. He who continues with Jesus and His disciples; 2. he in whose heart Jesus goes out and in (Starke).—*Man's life a journey to a place, where he remains for ever.* 1. There are two paths. 2. Let us choose the narrow one.—*How the good of the Church was taken care of in the choice of Matthias.* 1. Whatever may be the charge in the Church, it essentially depends on two things: clear consciousness of the divine determination, and unshaken fidelity in following after the Lord. 2. Among Christians, no choice should be made without prayer and the divine blessing. 3. The lot, so that no partiality can come into play, is admissible when there is a perfect equality between two candidates (Schleiermacher).—*The word of God is the only safe guide in the solution of every difficult problem of life.* 1. It makes us consider the most complicated circumstances in which we are placed as of divine appointment. 2. It induces us clearly to survey the connecting circumstances which may

direct us to the right path. 3. It teaches us in believing prayer to commit the final determination to the Lord.—*The wages of sin, or the miserable end of Judas.* 1. He ought to have been a disciple of Christ, and he betrayed his Lord. 2. He ought to have performed the duties of his bishopric, and he acquired the field of blood. 3. He ought to have proclaimed the Risen One, and he perished as a suicide. 4. He ought to have received the Holy Ghost, and he went into condemnation (Florey). —*The choice of Matthias by lot, an evidence of a faith*, which, 1. even after painful experiences, despairs not of the triumph of the kingdom of Christ; 2. recognises the high calling and importance of the apostolic office; 3. in consciousness of its own weakness, refers the decision to the Lord in everything (Leonhardi and Spiegelhauer).—*The divine election.* 1. A work of the free grace of God. 2. It demands of us a God-pleasing heart and conduct (Kapff).—*The look to the Lord as knowing the heart:* 1. For humiliation; 2. for elevation of mind (Beck).—*How the disciples of the Lord waited for the Spirit.* 1. They remained together; 2. they were with one accord; 3. they prayed (Lisco). —*How the Christian waits for the manifestation of the Lord.* As the disciples who abode at Jerusalem, 1. obedient, because full of faith; 2. united, because full of love; 3. praying, because full of hope.—*That we have nothing to fear for the success of the kingdom of God on earth, even when such fall away who were especially called to His service.* 1. The fact that such may fall away (vers. 15–20). 2. The certainty that this brings no material disadvantage to the progress of the kingdom of God (vers. 21–27) (Lisco).—*The devotion and harmony of the first disciples, an example for all times.* 1. Through devotion, is harmony sanctified and made more cordial. 2. Through harmony, devotion becomes warmer and more elevated (Lechler).—*What should induce us to constancy in prayer?* 1. Want and need. 2. The blessed promises of God (The same).—*The source of Christian energy and candour:* 1. True knowledge of self and sin; 2. experience of grace and reconciliation in Christ.—Judas and Peter, monuments of divine justice and mercy.—*How we should think and speak of the sins and punishments of others:* 1. With frankness and truth; 2. with humility and self-examination; 3. with the pity of love.—The steps of sin seen in the course and fate of Judas.—Covetousness a root of all evil.—Easily ac-

quired, easily lost.—*The word of God a light to our ways.* 1. It teaches us rightly to regard events. 2. It points to what we have to do.—*What is requisite to the office of a teacher:* 1. Right knowledge of the truth according to godliness; 2. personal intercourse with Jesus.—The office of a teacher, the office of a witness.—*The proper kind of prayer.* 1. Respectful and humble, as before the infinite Majesty. 2. Believing and earnest, as with the Friend of the soul.—*What effect it should have upon us that the Lord knoweth the heart:* 1. Humble self-knowledge; 2. child-like trust.—*Judas the lost, and Matthias the chosen.* 1. Judas lost, (*a*) not by an eternal divine rejection, (*b*) but by his own fault, (*c*) by which certainly the punitive justice of God is manifested. 2. Matthias chosen, (*a*) not on account of merit (what had he more than Barsabas?), (*b*) but by the free grace of God, (*c*) to which he resigns his will with pious heart and conduct. —*Matthias' entrance into the apostleship, a symbol of a blessed entrance into the ministerial office.* Three things must co-operate: 1. A proper preparation from within; 2. an orderly call from without; 3. the highest confirmation from above.

SECTION II.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH AS THE CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS. (CHAP. II. 1–47.)

A.

The Miracle of Pentecost itself in its external manifestation and internal operation: those met together are filled with the Holy Ghost and speak in other Languages.

CHAP. II. 1–4.

CONTENTS.—On the day of Pentecost, the Old Testament feast of harvest, the promise was fulfilled, and the Holy Ghost was poured forth on the disciples assembled with one accord, not without mighty signs, in a sound as of a storm of wind, and in flames of fire which distributed themselves upon the

believers. The inward fulness of the Spirit manifested itself immediately in speaking with other tongues.

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all together with one accord. 2 And suddenly there occurred a rushing sound from heaven, as if a mighty wind passed along, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them divided tongues, as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them to speak out.

Ver. 1. Ἅπαντες ὁμοθυμαδόν, to be preferred to the reading πάντες ὁμοῦ.
Ver. 3. Καθεζόμενοι, more correct than καθήμενοι.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. Luke marks the time of this occurrence sufficiently exactly as the day of Pentecost. When this day was fulfilled, that is, during the course of the day with which the space of fifty days from the Passover ended, this great event happened. The words certainly read as if the fulfilling of this one day were meant, and on this Meyer relies. (*Ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς.*) But the expression *πληροῦσθαι* is by Luke (Luke ix. 51; Acts ix. 23) constantly used to denote the termination of some longer period; and so the word is here evidently used. The feast of Pentecost, then, was the day during the course of which the outpouring of the Spirit took place. This "feast of seven weeks" was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the first day of the Passover, and consequently in that year on a Sunday, provided the first day of the Passover on the year of our Lord's death happened on a Friday, and the second Passover-day, from which the fifty days were reckoned, on a Saturday. This agrees with the ancient tradition of the Church, that the first Christian Pentecost coincided with Sunday.—The Mosaic feast of Pentecost, one of the three great annual Jewish feasts, was, according to the statutes of the law, a harvest feast, or more correctly the feast at the end of harvest; the beginning of which coincided with the Passover, and its end was celebrated by the offering of the first loaves as a thank-offering. That the feast of Pentecost was likewise a memorial of the giving of the law from Sinai, is a supposition which rests only on the statement of later Rabbins: we find no trace of this opinion either in the Old or in the New Testament, and as

little in the writings of Philo and Josephus. Accordingly, the fathers, as, for example, Chrysostom, have understood the feast of harvest, and not the giving of the law, as the Old Testament type of the outpouring of the Spirit; and it is at least questionable, whether the usual parallels drawn between the New Testament Pentecost and the giving of the law at Sinai are justified and well founded. More safely may the parallels be drawn between the Christian Pentecost and the feast of harvest, *e.g.*, as Olshausen does; inasmuch as at the Christian Pentecost the whole harvest of the Jewish people, those who had been brought to the fruit of true repentance and renewal of heart, were gathered in and consecrated to God; and inasmuch as Christ, the corn of wheat, dead and fallen to the ground, from this day brought forth much fruit, and produced an abundant harvest (John xii. 24).

2. The place where this important event happened cannot be so exactly determined from the statement of Luke as the time. For in ver. 1 it is only stated that all the disciples were assembled in one place; and from ver. 2, it is evident that this place of meeting was a house. But what kind of house, remains in obscurity. So much only is probable, that it was a private house, perhaps the same which in Acts i. 13 is mentioned as the meeting-place of the disciples. Many expositors, and of late Olshausen, Baumgarten, and Lange, suppose that the house where the disciples met belonged to the temple; namely, that it was one of the thirty rooms in the adjoining buildings of the temple, mentioned by Josephus, and which he calls *οἴκους*. But in default of all exact determination pointing to this, we cannot, with good reason, think on the adjoining buildings of the temple. There is no positive ground for this supposition. That we should have to seek the disciples on that day—a theocratic festival—and at the first hour of prayer, nowhere else than in the temple, is more plausible than convincing. Doubtless the disciples had assembled long before the first hour of prayer—for what happened required time—and even some hours might have elapsed since their first coming together in the morning, before Peter could say, "It is the third hour of the day."—Also, it is not to be imagined that the disciples, without exciting attention, could have been able to meet together in any part of the temple in such numbers, and as an exclusive society, unmixed with other Israelites. Further,

the multitude who flocked together does not necessarily point to the temple; it only supposes that, in the neighbourhood of the place of meeting, there was some sufficiently large public square where many could congregate. And, lastly, the reason that the occurrence would appear much more significant if it took place in the temple ("the solemn inauguration of the Church in the sanctuary of the Old Covenant"—Olshausen), has least in its favour; for its whole strength lies in the imagination.

3. Who were the persons that were assembled, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost? Ver. 1 says, "They were all together with one accord." From this, so much at least at first sight is evident, that not only the apostles were present and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, but also the other disciples. This is indisputably certain from ver. 14, where the apostles are distinguished from the rest, who also were filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake with tongues. But there is a variety of opinion with regard to the other disciples: whether only the hundred and twenty (chap. i. 18), or a yet greater number, were assembled and received the Holy Ghost. The first opinion is the most common, but the latter appears the more probable, when it is recollected that the day was a great feast of the Old Covenant, when, without doubt, such disciples who were not domiciled in Jerusalem, or retained there by the express command of the Lord, would be in the holy city, and would certainly assemble with one accord with the other disciples. Thus, then, it is not only the twelve apostles, but the whole number of the disciples of Jesus then at Jerusalem, who were met together, and shared in the outpouring of the Spirit.

4. What happened took place suddenly (*ἄφνω*), that is, unexpectedly. The disciples were very far from expecting anything violent: they were greatly surprised. Baumgarten indeed thinks that it was very evident to the disciples that they should wait with eager expectation exactly at this sacred period. But although we may suppose a certain elevated frame of mind suitable to the Jewish festival, yet we are by no means to suppose an assured expectation of the fulfilment of the promise which the Lord had made to His disciples. The fulfilment came upon them entirely unexpectedly.

5. *A rushing sound.*—The external appearances and signs which accompanied the outpouring of the Spirit were both sound

and light; the one a sign for the sense of hearing, and the other a sign for the sense of seeing. The sound from heaven spreading itself from above downwards, was a noise, a tumult, a rushing (ἦχος) as of a wind which passed violently along; and this mighty penetrating blast filled the whole house where the disciples were assembled. There is no mention in the text of a real storm of wind, still less of an earthquake attended by a tempest which shook the building (Neander). The nature of the violent noise is only made somewhat clear by a comparison (ὥσπερ) with the noise of a storm of wind: it was a so-called בַּת קוֹל. From ver. 6, it is evident that this extraordinary sound, mentioned in ver. 2, was audible throughout the city. Besides this sign addressed to the ear, there was another addressed to the eye: along with the sound there was a luminous sign; the disciples of Jesus saw (not, there was seen on them—Luther) tongues as of fire, which distributed themselves and rested upon each of them. It was as little natural fire, as the sound was the noise of a real wind; but it seemed or appeared to them as flames in the form of tongues, only luminous, not burning. It is wholly out of place to interpret this appearance of flames in a natural manner. We cannot here think on electric lights, like flames lighting down on the tops of towers, masts, and even on men (Paulus); for this phenomenon took place not in the open air, but in the inside of a house. To affirm that a flash of lightning passed through the room, and that the excited minds of the apostles caused them to see that light in strange forms (Heinrichs), or that by reason of their enthusiasm they imagined they saw tongues of fire (Heumann), is to put too much into the text, and to attribute it to the imagination, that is, to self-deception. The fact of Pentecost—namely, the mighty internal transformation in the souls of the disciples by which they were elevated to a positive, aggressive, and world-conquering faith and power of testimony—is in itself so miraculous, that the particular miraculous phenomena conjoined with it need be no stumblingblock; otherwise, we must suppose a spiritual world absolutely separate from the world of sense and matter, in other words, an unbiblical and unreal spiritualism. Both the loud sound and these flames of fire are only like (ὥσπερ, ὡσεὶ) to natural phenomena; but they belong not to the order of natural events, and are even, as well as the chief thing—the filling of the persons with spiritual

power from on high—supernatural and divine miracles. The audible and visible signs were as the sensible garment of the spiritual power, and served partly as heralds to proclaim and externally to glorify the sending of the Spirit, partly to represent symbolically the power and operation of the Spirit, and partly to increase the susceptibility of the disciples for the gift of the Spirit. As regards the symbolical import: the audible sound was the symbol of a mighty power; the noise of the sound coming from heaven was an image that the power was from above, from Him who, exalted to heaven, sits enthroned there. The filling of the whole house with the sound was a sign that all the persons assembled were to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The visible flames were a type of the holy zeal and inspiration which, kindled from above, would flame forth from their hearts. The appearance of tongues indicated that the tongue, the word and speech pervaded and ruled by the Holy Ghost, would communicate and open up the heavenly and the holy. And that such tongues of light and fire sat upon each, was a type that to each the fulness of the Spirit was destined and imparted as an abiding gift.

6. *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*—The centre-point of the whole of this miraculous event was the filling of all believers with the Holy Ghost. The expression ἐπλήσθησαν Πνεύματος ἁγίου may, and must be understood according to its exact and full import: they were filled with the Holy Ghost, so that the Holy Ghost was not imparted to them only in part, but in His entire fulness (John iii. 34).—To understand properly the nature of this filling with the Holy Ghost, we must look backwards and forwards, and ascertain its relation to the operations, communications, and participations of the Spirit, both before and after. As regards the early communications of the Spirit, it is certainly said, even in the Old Testament, of Bezaleel and other skilful men, and of Joshua, that God filled them with the Spirit of God, with the Spirit of wisdom, etc. (Exod. xxxi. 3, xxviii. 3, xxxv. 31; Deut. xxxiv. 9); but the context shows that in these passages it is artistic or military endowments that are spoken about. The operations of the Spirit on the prophets of Israel are always indicated only in such a manner, that it is evident that there were no full and abiding communications of the Spirit of God pervading their whole per-

sons. The angel of the Lord (Luke i. 15) indeed promised to Zacharias, that his son John would be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb; but there is something so entirely peculiar, and in the whole historical relation of the forerunner to the Messiah so extraordinary, that it can scarcely be taken into consideration. The disciples and apostles of Jesus certainly received at an earlier period the Holy Ghost (John xx. 22); but that this could have been nothing abiding, or completely satisfying, is evident from the repeated promises of Jesus of a yet future communication of the Holy Spirit and of power (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 8). Thus, then, we are to regard the communication of the Spirit at Pentecost, in distinction from all earlier communications, as final, complete, and abiding. However, considering the after life of the disciples, we must ever remember that this outpouring of the Spirit was nothing of a magical nature, that it did not transform and pervade the whole person at a stroke; but, on the contrary, it subsequently required and laid the foundation for a gradual appropriation of spiritual strength, a continual increase, a teaching, reminding, and guiding of the Spirit into all truth (John xiv. 16), a continued sanctifying, leading, and drawing (Rom. viii. 14; John xvii. 17). The circumstance, moreover, is not to be overlooked, that all present were filled with the Holy Ghost: not only a portion, particularly not only the apostles, but all assembled,—all believers without distinction of office and calling, of age and sex; in particular, women and young men (ver. 17), for the visible signs of the Spirit, the fiery tongues, sat upon each of them.

7. *They began to speak with other tongues.*—An immediate effect of their being filled with the Spirit. What took place within their spirits and minds, that must be expressed and made evident, not at first to the world, for they were yet in the exclusive fellowship of believers, but before those similarly affected; for where the heart is full, there the mouth speaks. For this reason, it is also evident that the object of their speaking could not have been the proclamation of the Gospel, for that would have been inappropriate in this place and at this time; but praise to God, "the festive words" (Baumgarten, Lange). There was nothing extraordinary in this, taken by itself; what was extraordinary in the matter was, that the Christians, in consequence of the gift of the Spirit, spoke with other tongues

(ἑτέραις γλώσσαις). This cannot possibly mean nothing more than that "by the influence of the Spirit the tongues of the disciples became essentially changed, they became the organs of the Holy Ghost, whilst formerly they were the organs of the flesh" (Baumgarten). The narrative which follows leaves no doubt to every unprejudiced mind, that here we have to conceive of speaking in foreign languages which were new to the speakers themselves. (See below.) It is evident, from the concluding clause of the verse, that no previously applied labour and learning are supposed, but a free gift of the Spirit; and, moreover, it is here already indicated that there was a multiplicity of languages. But as the disciples were yet entirely among themselves, this speaking in foreign languages had no reference to those whose languages they were, but it had its design in itself. Whilst, then, the disciples, filled and elevated by the Spirit of the Father and the Son, praying, rejoicing, and praising, broke forth in praise of God, and that in various foreign languages, they thus typically represented the entire sanctified humanity of the latter times, when all tribes, and tongues, and languages shall serve and praise God and His Anointed in the Holy Ghost.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The time and the hour when the promises are to be fulfilled are not revealed either in the Old or in the New Testament (Acts i. 5, 7); and even when a certain determination of time is given, yet this is not so precise, as that we can be perfectly certain of the time when the fulfilment is to be expected; yet the prophets searched "what, and what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify" (1 Pet. i. 11). But as certainly as the promise is the word of God, so certainly the fulfilment, the work of God, will occur at the proper time. By the promise, faith is exercised; by the fulfilment, it is strengthened.

2. The Pentecost of the Old Covenant is the day of the New Testament outpouring of the Spirit. Thus the feast of Pentecost has a double import. The New Covenant is built on the Old; the Gospel is the fulfilment of the law. In this respect, as regards holidays and feasts, Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil.

3. In the revelations of God, the spiritual and corporeal are always connected together: the highest thing in this respect, the

most intimate union of the spiritual and corporeal, is in the person of Christ Himself, inasmuch as in Him dwelt, and still dwells, all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9). But before and after, everything in the deeds and revelations, in the means and operations of the grace of God, is both spiritual and material: the word and the sacrament are of this nature; with the material, the visible, and the audible, are the spiritual and the invisible most intimately united. So also is it with the communication of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost lighted upon Jesus at His baptism in the form of a dove (Matt. iii. 16); the Lord breathed upon the apostles, and thus for the first time bestowed upon them the Holy Ghost (John xx. 22); and now here, when the fulness of the Spirit was bestowed upon the disciples at Pentecost, it took place under visible and audible signs, which, coming down from heaven, accompanied the gift of the Spirit in the world of sense and matter, announcing and glorifying it, not without symbolical import, and not without reference to the promise that the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Matt. iii. 11).

4. Pentecost is the time of the outpouring of the Spirit. All earlier operations, suggestions, and communications of the Spirit of God were only partial, passing, and provisional. The outpouring of the Spirit, in the true and only sense, could not take place until now. The Redeemer must first have finished His work on earth, and be exalted and glorified, before the Holy Ghost could be given (John vii. 39). For, on the one hand, not until now could the exalted Lord send the Spirit from the Father (John xv. 26), or pray the Father for the Helper (*παράκλητος*) for the disciples, and the Father send the Spirit in the name of Jesus (John xiv. 26); and, on the other hand, not until now was the susceptibility of the disciples for the gift of the Spirit fully ripened, when they, after the ascension of Jesus and the removal of His visible presence, expected—"looking for and hasting unto" (2 Pet. iii. 12)—with their whole souls, the fulfilment of His great promise. The speciality of the pentecostal gift, as distinguished from other communications of the Holy Spirit, consists (1) in the fulness of the Spirit, with an abundance of His powers and gifts; and (2) in the abiding union of the Holy Ghost with human persons, and relatively with mankind.

5. Not only the apostles, but all the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost was and is not the exclusive privilege of any particular office (although it be the highest in the Church, the apostleship), condition, or sex; but is the gracious gift of God to all who believe on Him. There is a universal priesthood of all believers, and the Holy Ghost is the anointing which consecrates and qualifies for this priesthood.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

And when the day of Pentecost was fulfilled (ver. 1). With the pentecostal gift, the Lord proved that He came to fulfil. Times of promise did indeed precede; the waiting for it was long; but then the fulfilment came quickly (Rieger).—As the Passover of the Old Testament found its antitype in the Christian Easter by the death and resurrection of Christ, so the feast of Pentecost found its antitype in the Christian Pentecost by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Ancient Israel celebrated at Pentecost the feast of harvest: behold here, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the field white already for harvest, to which our Lord pointed His disciples at Jacob's well, the first great harvest feast, when three thousand souls in one day, as first-fruits, were laid up in the granary of the Lord. Ancient Israel at Pentecost remembered the giving of the law at Sinai: behold here, in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the giving of the law of the New Testament, when the will of God is written with a pen of fire, not on tables of stone, but as the law of the Spirit upon the heart.—*They were all together with one accord.* The Holy Ghost is given not to the quarrelsome and the ungodly, but to those who live in unity, and who pray and supplicate (Starke).—Whoever wishes to receive the Holy Ghost must not forsake the assembly of believers.—Continuance in prayer is converted from being a burden to a pleasure, when faith relies firmly on the divine promises, and when experience of their gracious fulfilment is more and more conjoined with it (Apost. Past.).—*How, in the acts of God, the new and the old are always united.* 1. God remains not stationary with the old: He creates the new. 2. He does not disown and destroy the old; but erects the new upon it (Lechler).—*The import of Christian feasts.* 1. Memorials of the acts and kindnesses of God. 2. Monuments

of the truth and faithfulness of God.—*The holy and glorious connection between promise and fulfilment.* 1. The promises become the more dear and certain to us by the fulfilments which we see. 2. The fulfilment becomes the more adorable and glorious by having been promised.—*How ought the believer to act with reference to the promises of God?* 1. He should wait (in patience). 2. He should hasten unto (with eager desire), 1 Pet. iii. 12.—*The expectation of the righteous is converted into joy:* if it is, 1. founded only on the word of God; 2. waits with humility; and, 3. continues in prayer (Lechler).—It often comes unexpectedly: the disciples on this day scarcely expected it. But "when the time comes, then help with might breaks in, and, to shame thy murmurings, it will come unexpectedly"[1] (Besser).—*The New Testament Pentecost, the glorious fulfilment of the Old Testament Pentecost:* 1. As the feast of the giving of the law. 2. As the feast of harvest.

And suddenly there happened a sound from heaven (vers. 2 and 3). The operations of God proceed, indeed, ordinarily through the word; but yet they come, especially the very remarkable ones, often very quickly and unexpectedly, particularly to souls who are previously, by the Spirit of grace, led into believing waiting for them, and are so prepared, having their hearts open. The united prayer of the apostles was a cry to heaven pleasing to God, and this sound was a delightful answer and counter-cry from heaven: thus was this ἦχος at the same time an echo. So faithful is God to His children and servants, their cry presses into heaven to His heart; and there results from that, as the pious Godwin remarks, the return of prayer from heaven (Apost. Past.).—The gifts of the Holy Ghost are heavenly (Jas. i. 17, iii. 17), make themselves perceived (2 Cor. iv. 13), are powerful (Rom. viii. 14), and fill the whole soul (Starke).—It was a mighty wind, under which the Holy Ghost took possession of the heart; and thereby is very beautifully represented His power over the souls of men, as He drives willing hearts along, as a small ship into whose sails this gracious wind blows. Also with His power He breaks in pieces the mountains, and rends asunder the rocks, when He brings hearts to wholesome repentance and sorrow.—Well for the teacher through whose garden or heart this holy wind of God

[1] From a German hymn.

blows (Cant. iv. 16); and has as a north wind savingly alarmed, dispersed the mists of false security, thrown down all the heights of self-righteousness, and driven to Christ; but whose heart is also, by means of the same holy wind of God, as a fruitful and refreshing south wind, pervaded by the grace of the Gospel, so that his spices may drop out and flow to others, that through him, as a richly anointed messenger of God, the savour of the knowledge of Christ might be made manifest in all places (2 Cor. ii. 14, 15) (Apost. Past.).—The rushing wind and flaming fire are only the forerunners of the Holy Spirit: He Himself comes invisibly into hearts; but these signs represent His being. Thus nature may not rest, it also must do service in the sanctuary. God makes the winds His messengers, and the flaming fires His ministers. "The creature shall yet be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and therefore it performs the service of bell-ringer in all great Christian feasts" (Ahlfeld).—*Tongues as of fire.* This was the baptism of fire predicted by John (Matt. iii. 11): the fire kindled, longed for by the Lord Himself (Luke xii. 49). The Holy Spirit is a divine fire that purifies the heart, consumes all sins in it, sanctifies and raises it to God (Quesnel).—*And it sat upon each of them.* Where the Spirit of God has once taken up His abode, there He abides: He rests upon those whom He has anointed, leads and rules them henceforth, so that they may be diligent in whatever work they intend (1 Pet. iv. 14) (Apost. Past.).—*The accompanying signs of the outpouring of the Spirit:* 1. As proofs that the kingdom of power and grace is under one God; 2. as types of the Spirit and His power (Lechler).—The sound of wind and flames of fire, striking images of the nature and operation of the Holy Ghost. 1. The Holy Ghost has the nature of wind: (*a*) in His secret coming; (*b*) in His powerful shaking; (*c*) in His purifying blowing; (*d*) in His soft refreshing. 2. The Holy Ghost has the nature of fire: (*a*) in His bright shining; (*b*) in His genial warming; (*c*) in His destructive burning; (*d*) in His rapid spreading.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (ver. 4). The heart of man cannot be empty. The more it is emptied of self, the creature, and sin, the more is it filled with the Holy Ghost. Blessed fulness! To be full of the Holy Ghost—a fulness which

burdens not the soul but elevates it, and incites it to honour God (Quesnel).—As here, not every one received the same and an equal measure of the Spirit and His gifts, but yet every one was filled, and obtained such a measure as he could receive, and afterwards could use in the work appointed to Him by God; so is it still. He imparts to every one, according as He will and can make use of him, that God may thus receive a full heart for His service (Apost. Past.).—Who can avoid thinking on these words, "Behold, the Lord passed by," etc.! 1 Kings xix. 11. Thus here the Lord came properly not in the wind, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice, by the entrance into their hearts, and by the words which proceeded from their mouth (Williger).—*And they began to speak with other tongues.* The new tongue and spiritual eloquence are not gifts of nature, but of the Spirit (Ap. Past.).—The Holy Spirit is never idle, but works where He dwells: one of the chief instruments which He employs is the tongue, Eph. iv. 29, v. 19 (Starke).—When the Holy Spirit fills and enlightens the heart, then we speak with other tongues (The same).—If we would proclaim the works of God, we must have another and a new tongue, and especially a changed and new heart, Ps. li. 12, 15.—As the tongue kindled of hell is a fire which consumes everything with its wickedness; so tongues, when they are kindled of heaven, are converted into torches by which a divine fire can be kindled in many souls, Jas. iii. 6.—Not sword and shot, but the tongue, should bring men to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 4.—All commenced, as they could not otherwise do, to give vent in words to the overflowing pleasure of the divine life within them. But hark! they were with other tongues than those with which they hitherto had spoken. They were new tongues, kindled not from below, but from above at the fire of the Divine Being, moved to praise and to testify to this great miracle of renewal. They were other tongues also with regard to language; for they spoke with divided tongues, the languages of foreign and distant nations, as a sign that the testimony now begun belongs to all creatures, and that the Spirit of God is a restorer of the unity of language, an unraveller of the Babylonish confusion of tongues in one holy Sion of all nations. The contents of their discourse was praise to God for His wonderful and great plan of redemption, now all at once apprehended—the earnest of the eternal halleluiah (Stier).—The family of God

who in all the languages of the world praised the Lord, shadows forth to us how one day the whole world will praise God (Bengel).—The judgment of tongues dispersed mankind; the gift of tongues unites the dispersed into one people (Grotius).—This day, on the new Pentecost, has the joyful and blessed kingdom of Christ commenced, which is full of joy, courage, and safety. That is another sermon, speech, and language which drives not the people back, as did the sermon and voice on Mount Sinai, frightens them not, kills and murders them not, but makes them joyful and bold. Christ promised to His disciples to send the Holy Ghost, who should not be a Spirit of fear, but a Comforter, and should make them bold and courageous against all fears. For on that day, as soon as the Holy Spirit was given from heaven, each of the apostles, whom shortly before no one had been able to comfort, stands up, and is so courageous as if he would devour the whole world. Christ, after His resurrection, had enough to do to comfort and gather them together, as timid and scattered chickens, and could not even with His repeated exhortations and comforts make them strong and bold. But now, when the Holy Ghost comes with His mighty wind and blows upon them, He makes their heart so joyful and glad, and their tongue so fiery, that each openly stands up and preaches. No one inquires after another, but each is in himself so courageous that he dared venture to press through the whole world. Therefore this is a very different word and sermon from that given by Moses (Luther).

The gift of Pentecost, the best gift of God. 1. In virtue of its root: the merits of Christ, His humiliation and exaltation. 2. In virtue of its nature: the union of the Spirit of God with man. 3. In virtue of its operations: the new creation of the heart and of the world.—*The permanence of the union of the Spirit of God with man:* 1. As a continued indwelling, enlightening, and sanctifying power; 2. but not as an external property—we may grieve and lose Him, Eph. iv. 30—but as a power superior to the soul.—*Be filled with the Spirit* (Eph. v. 18). 1. Necessary, if we would be saved. 2. The means of attaining it: (*a*) Humble self-knowledge; (*b*) earnestness in sanctification; (*c*) faithfulness in the employment of communicated gifts; (*d*) constancy in prayer (Lechler).

The new tongue which ought to fall to our lot by the Spirit of

Pentecost. 1. Wherein it consists: not in a miraculous gift of languages, nor in a formal repetition of pious expressions, but in a heart and mouth opened to thankful praise of divine grace and joyful confession of the Lord. 2. Whence it proceeds: not from our natural state, nor from the arts and sciences, but from above, from the Spirit of God, who touches heart and lips with fire from heaven. 3. What purpose it serves: not to vain self-glorification or worldly delectation, but to the praise of God and to the message of salvation to the world.

B.

The mixed Impression of this Occurrence—namely, the Disciples filled with the Holy Ghost and speaking in other Languages—on the Jews out of all Nations then present at Jerusalem.

Chap. II. 5–13.

Contents.—The greatest astonishment created among the multitude flocking together at this speaking in other languages; for Jews out of all lands and of different languages heard them speak each in his own language; but whilst the majority seriously considered the matter, others began to mock at it, as if the disciples were drunken.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now, when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, for every one heard them speak in his own dialect. 7 But they were amazed, and wondered, saying one to another, Behold, are not these who speak Galileans? 8 And how then hear we every man in our own dialect, wherein we are born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the districts of Libya about Cyrene, and Romans here present, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes, and Arabians, we hear them speak with our tongues the great works of God. 12 And they were all confounded, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What may this be? 13 But others, mocking, said, These men are full of sweet wine.

Ver. 7. After ἐξίσταντο δέ the textus receptus has πάντες, which the newer critics omit, according to the principal MSS. and versions, as well as the fathers Chrysostom and Augustin.—It is doubtful whether πρὸς ἀλλήλους is a later addition. Lachmann.

Ver. 12. Instead of τί ἂν θέλοι Lachmann and Bornemann, with C.D.A. and Chrysostom, read τί θέλει,—an unfounded correction, inasmuch as τι ἂν θέλοι was considered an indirect question, which it is not.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Now when this sound was heard.*—A multitude of men were made attentive, and flocked to the neighbourhood of the place where the disciples were assembled. By ἡ φωνὴ αὕτη we cannot understand, with Brenz, Calvin, Grotius, and others, the rumour of the event noised abroad (φωνὴ is not φήμη); or, with Kuinoel, Bleek, and others, the loud speaking with tongues, for then λαλεῖν (ver. 4) would be loud shouting, and φωνὴ would be in the plural. But by φωνὴ is meant, as all modern interpreters understand it, the ἦχος of ver. 2. This mighty sound from heaven, which Luke has compared to the rushing of a strong wind, was not, as is generally without reason concluded, only audible within the house (ver. 2 gives not the least countenance to this idea); but, on the contrary, was heard widely throughout the city, yet so, as we must understand it, that it was observable that this heavenly sound, so to speak, struck the place where the disciples were assembled, and thus drew the multitude to it. After what has been said above, it is evident that, with Neander, to refer this sound to an earthquake which drove the people out of their houses, is arbitrary. Moreover, Lange's supposition, that at first only the susceptible were drawn into sympathy by the voice from heaven, and were thus collected together, is not supported by the text and context.

2. *The multitude came together.*—The multitude, flocking together, heard the wonderful speaking with tongues of the disciples, filled with the Holy Ghost. But how are the circumstances of the case to be explained? The text leaves us in uncertainty; and the assumed impossibility of intelligibly representing the real circumstances of the case has been rashly employed as a reason against the historical reality of the event. As Luke has not more exactly described the occurrence, we cannot venture to say that so and so it happened, and not otherwise. But, at all events,, the possibility of a connected representation of the case cannot be contested; one thing or another may possibly have occurred. It is possible that the disciples,—at first assembled in a large room of a house unknown to us, as soon as the Spirit was poured out upon them, and while, speaking with tongues, elated and inspired, they proclaimed the praise of God, —went out before the house, and were induced to speak before

the crowd gradually collected; and if the house stood near one of the larger open squares of the city, a very considerable multitude could easily be collected there, such as must be supposed during the discourse of Peter.

3. *And they were all amazed, and wondered.*—Among the multitude who came together, Luke particularly mentions men out of various lands and nations, which in ver. 5 is expressed in a usual hyperbolical manner, "out of every nation under heaven," without our being obliged to take the universal terms (especially in reference to vers. 9–11) in their strict and full meaning.—These Jews ἦσαν κατοικοῦντες ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ: this is generally understood of late (De Wette, Meyer, and among the ancients, Chrysostom) of a permanent residence and fixed habitation, according to which foreign Jews of religious susceptibility (ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς) had become domiciled in Jerusalem, in order to be near the temple, and to spend the evening of their life in the holy city; and that only such are here meant to be indicated. Certainly the classical use of the expression κατοικεῖν conveys the idea of a fixed residence, not merely of a temporary sojourn, particularly of a new selected dwelling-place after a former dwelling-place has been left; and the New Testament passages, Luke xiii. 4, Acts vii. 48, ix. 22, perfectly agree with this. But the connection of the passage is against a strict rendering of this word, inasmuch as, ver. 9, κατοικοῦντες τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν, and ver. 10, ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι, lead us to understand that these people were, for the most part at least, at that time still residents of foreign lands, and were only present as temporary sojourners in Jerusalem, chiefly as pilgrims to the feast; others might have been formally domiciled in the city. The expression κατοικοῦντες, then, is to be taken with a certain latitude of meaning, and with this agree in general the older explanations.

4. *Parthians and Medes.*—This list of fifteen countries from which people were present, is, upon the whole, systematically arranged, proceeding from the N.E. to the W., then turning to the S., and concluding with the W.; but in single instances the order is not followed with scholastic strictness. The four first names comprehend the east, lands beyond the Euphrates, into which the Israelites were driven by the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities. Then Judea is suddenly named where we would

least expect it, because it forms the transition to the Asiatic districts. The question naturally suggests itself, whether here another name did not originally stand; but the ancient MSS. give us no light. The suppositions, Idumea, India, and Bithynia, are wholly imaginary: Armenia, the reading of Tertullian and Augustin, might have some authority in its favour. The reasons given for the insertion of Judea—that it is mentioned for Roman readers, and from a Roman point of view (Olshausen), or with reference to languages, because the Jewish dialect was different from the Galilean dialect of the disciples (Bengel, Meyer)—are not sufficient fully to explain the passage which contains the name: there still remains an obscurity upon it. The next five names comprehend the districts of Asia Minor, at first from the E. to the W., where Asia denotes, according to the Roman division of provinces, the narrow band of coast-line to the west, including Mysia, Lydia, and Caria (Mannert's Geography of the Greeks and Romans); then turning again to the E. (Phrygia), and naming a southern maritime province (Pamphylia). The transition is then to the far south, where of Africa both Egypt and Cyrenian Libya are mentioned: in both lands for many centuries numerous Jews resided. Lastly, from the distant west, Romans are named, that is, Jews who were domiciled in Rome and in the western part of the Roman empire generally, and now present at Jerusalem; and then, afterwards, Cretes and Arabians are mentioned by way of supplement. Between these, as if he had intended to close the list with the Romans, Luke makes, with reference to all the above-mentioned lands, the distinction between born Jews (*Ἰουδαῖοι*) and converted Gentiles (*προσήλυτοι*).—This catalogue of nations and lands is given by Luke, as is clear from the context, in order to show the many and various languages and dialects which these foreign Jews and proselytes spoke. There is no reason to declare the catalogue inaccurate and nugatory in this respect; because, for example, in the cities of Lesser Asia and Egypt, in Cyrene and Crete, Greek was spoken, and also in Rome the Greek language was well known: for, notwithstanding this, every country, and even in some degree every province, had its peculiar dialect, and it is especially dialects (*διάλεκτος*) that are here spoken of. Moreover, that this list of names in this extended form was

not actually a part of the speech of these people, but was put into their mouths in order to impress us with the great number of different dialects, is self-evident, and can only cause a stumblingblock to pedantic conceptions of the historical fidelity of a narrative. To assert that the entire list, although wanting in no manuscript, is spurious and inserted (Ziegler and others), is an example of arbitrary criticism.

5. *We hear them speak with our tongues.*—After what has been said, it cannot be doubted that we are here to conceive of the disciples speaking in different languages and dialects. The expression *ἤκουον εἷς ἕκαστος τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων αὐτῶν* summarily states this in few words. It is only from a superficial view that it can be inferred from this, that each of the disciples must at the same time have spoken in several dialects (Bleek). The comprehensive plural, *λαλούντων αὐτῶν*, only causes this appearance, which, rationally interpreted, means that one spoke in this dialect, and another in that, so that each foreigner could hear his own dialect spoken by one or the other. What increased the astonishment was, that the people knew that those who spoke were Galileans. The context (especially the names of people and nations mentioned with respect to their languages) shows that this name Galileans is also mentioned in a linguistic sense, inasmuch as the inhabitants of Galilee were accustomed to speak only the Aramaic. The name can neither designate the people as disciples of Jesus, which was only at a later period applied to them, nor a want of education belonging to the province of Galilee. What was to the hearers astonishing and incomprehensible was, that those belonging to Galilee could speak so many different dialects, the mother-tongues of foreign Jews and proselytes out of Asia, Africa, and Europe,—the Parthian, Phrygian, etc. No interpretation is compatible with the context which takes *γλῶσσαι* in any other sense than languages. Consequently, 1. the explanations are inadmissible which make *γλῶσσα* = tongue, the organ of speech. Thus Wieseler, an ecstatic speaking in soft tones and inarticulate sounds (Studien und Kritiken, 1838, p. 703); whilst Bardili and Eichhorn applied their similar explanation only to 1 Cor. xiv., but not to Acts ii.: David Schulz, on the other hand, loud shouting and exultation (Spiritual Gifts, 1836); Baur, tongues which the Spirit gave, the speech-organs of the Spirit. 2. Another and

equally untenable class of explanations make γλῶσσα = expression, the manner of speaking. Thus, according to Meyer, Heinrichs, and Bleek, antiquated, strange, provincial expressions; a meaning in which γλῶσσα occurs only with the learned Greek grammarians, and according to which ἑτέραι γλῶσσαι would be superfluous. 3. There remains, then, only the other explanation of the word γλῶσσα = language (Olshausen, De Wette, Meyer, Bäumlein, Studien of the Wurtemberg Clergy), which is recommended by the usage of the language and by the context, and according to which Luke describes a speaking of the disciples, filled with the Holy Ghost, in different languages and dialects.

But this assumed, it is yet asked: How the affair is to be understood—what is properly the essence and nature of the objective fact? Here, again, opinions are widely different. 1. Some conceive a natural speaking in foreign languages as the mother-tongue of some of the disciples not born in Galilee (Paulus, Eichhorn, etc.); so that the only portion of the circumstance that was unusual was, that the songs of praise were chiefly in the provincial dialects. This explanation evidently contradicts the text, as it takes away all ground for wonder and amazement. 2. Both in ancient (Gregory of Nazianzen, Beda, etc.) and in modern times (Erasmus, Schneckenburger, etc.), instead of a miracle of speaking, a miracle of hearing has been supposed; so that the disciples indeed spoke no other language but their Galilean mother-tongue, but the foreigners hearing them by a kind of spiritual "rapport," believed that they heard them speak in their own tongue. According to this, the peculiarity of the phenomenon consisted entirely in a subjective deception of the hearers, and, as with the first supposition, includes an error which is unworthy of the sacred history, and incompatible with the declaration of the historian (ver. 4). 3. A new and pretty widely spread opinion explains the historical essence of the fact not as an actual speaking in foreign languages, but praying with tongues, that is, ejaculations uttered involuntarily and unconsciously, in a high state of inspiration, and destitute of intelligible meaning (according to 1 Cor. xiv.), whereby it is for the most part supposed that this historical groundwork has been by tradition changed into a professed speaking, as is here related, in foreign languages. So Baur, De Wette, Hilgenfeld, Meyer, —the latter of whom combines with this explanation the above

opinion of Paulus, that a portion of the inspired were strangers who might have spoken in their different dialects. This opinion of Meyer is entirely opposed to the spirit and language of the narrative. With regard to the others, the aforesaid view rests partly on the parallel passages in the Epistles to the Corinthians, etc., treating of the gift of tongues, and partly also on the supposed impossibility of a miraculous speaking in foreign languages.

(*a.*) As regards the parallel passages, every section is to be explained by itself, and neither is Acts ii. to be interpreted from 1 Cor. xiv. nor conversely: only in secondary features can their relation to each other be established on sure grounds, and the latter (1 Cor. xiv.) is a problem which ought not to be avoided. Indeed, at a time when the tendency was to explain Acts ii. entirely from 1 Cor. xiv., and to refer the fact there related entirely to an ecstatic speaking with tongues, Bäumlein reversed the method, and, not without success, applied the speaking in foreign languages to 1 Cor. xiv. However, every difficulty arising from the latter passage (1 Cor. xiv.) has not been overcome. The Corinthian and Pentecostal speaking with tongues agree in the following points: 1. Both were an extraordinary operation and gift of the Holy Ghost, a χάρισμα, Acts ii. 4. 2. In both, the minds of the speakers were powerfully affected by the Spirit of God, so that their free-will and consciousness stept into the background,—a condition so remarkable and enigmatical, that it could make the impression, according to the disposition of an observer, of drunkenness or madness (compare 1 Cor. xiv. 23). 3. According to their nature, both were γλώσσαις λαλεῖν, not a doctrinal discourse, but a speech of devotion and praise of God.—But the two phenomena have also their points of difference: 1. The speaking of the disciples (Acts ii.) was directly intelligible to the hearers, whilst the Corinthians' speaking with tongues absolutely required the medium of an interpretation to be understood: 1 Cor. xiv. 2, 13, 16, 27. 2. The speaking in Acts ii. was clearly a speaking in foreign languages, whilst no decided and undoubted expression gives us to understand that this was the case with that mentioned in 1 Cor. xiv.

Thus, then, both phenomena are similar in essential points, but yet also have their peculiar differences, so that there is no sufficient reason to suppose that the one, particularly Acts ii., is in all respects the same as the other; and that wherein they

differ, this difference must be referred to mythical transformation.

(*b.*) This view of the subject in itself would hardly have led to that mythical opinion, were not the supposition of the impossibility of a miraculous gift of languages added to it, or had previously existed. In consequence of this supposition, Zeller (Acts of the Apostles, 1854) explains the whole pentecostal occurrence as completely unhistorical, a myth spun out from certain notions, but without having any foundation whatever in fact. But wherein consists this impossibility? Meyer maintains, "that the sudden communication of an ability to speak in a foreign language is neither logically possible, nor psychologically and morally thinkable." With regard to the logical possibility, as this is with all men essentially the same, and as all languages are similar in essentials, so every man possesses the key to the understanding and the capability of appropriating all languages. But the psychological thinkableness of the matter is chiefly denied; and that partly because it supposes copious speaking, formal statements of the disciples in foreign languages, and partly an abiding expertness to discourse in all manner of languages. Of the latter, there is no mention; nor do we find any trace of it in the Acts of the Apostles: the narrative in our section treats only of a passing phenomenon, and therefore is not encumbered with the above psychological difficulty. Also the fact gives another aspect to the affair, that according to the original, we are not to conceive of copious statements in foreign languages, but only of short ejaculations of elevated emotion in praise of God for His deeds and gifts. If, then, these are expressed in foreign languages, so this phenomenon must by no means be placed in the class of usual and natural things, as the above natural explanations attempt; for the account in our book represents the occurrence undeniably as something extraordinary and miraculous. Nevertheless we may mention, in opposition to the assertion that the thing is psychologically and morally unthinkable, analogous facts where persons, in a state of somnambulism, magnetism, or enthusiasm, have spoken in a dialect wholly unused by them; *e.g.*, High German instead of the provincial dialect, yea, even in foreign languages which they had never learned: the speaking with tongues in the Irvingite Church in 1830, observed by eye-

witnesses, is an analogous phenomenon. But as certainly as the filling of the persons with the Holy Ghost was a miraculous act and an extraordinary operation from above, so certainly we have also to regard this peculiar expression of the Spirit in other dialects and languages as a miraculous phenomenon.

6. *They were all confounded.*—Many of those then present respectfully and thoughtfully contemplated the affair, inquiring and wondering. These were the susceptible, whom Luke has described as pious and devout men. But all were not thus minded. Others indulged in a cold and frivolous disposition, closed themselves against the impression of this holy act of God upon their hearts, and sought to talk and jest it away, saying that it was nothing else than drunken babbling, excitement through spiritual intoxication, the spirit of wine and not the Spirit of God who spoke by these men. It must evidently be supposed that the manner in which the disciples spoke and conducted themselves, had something strange and excitable about it, otherwise this description would be inappropriate and inexplicable. But if this were the case, it is not to be taken for granted that the above class of hearers were blasphemers in the proper sense, or, as some have even affirmed, that they committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. Peter (ver. 15) only mildly admonishes them for their supposition, but does not express himself with revolted feeling. Many interpreters suppose that the mockers were only the residents in Jerusalem, whilst the susceptible were chiefly the foreign pilgrims; that the residents were hardened in consequence of the customary use of sacred things. But the text affords no sure grounds for that supposition: the foreign Israelites are evidently particularly mentioned, in order to make apparent the number of languages and dialects which the disciples, filled with the Holy Ghost, spoke. Doubtless the inquiring and susceptible were not among the strangers only, nor the mockers among the residents.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The outpouring of devotion in praise to God followed immediately the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the souls of the disciples. This holy fire was kindled from above in their souls, and the fire of devotion flamed from their souls upwards to heaven. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth

speaketh," Matt. xii. 34. The holiest feelings and thoughts cannot and will not remain shut up, but will break forth, in order to express themselves aloud. By the word the soul escapes out of the narrow breast, and the agitated heart again becomes light. As the eternal Son of God is Himself the Word; so also the Spirit of the Father and the Son gives to the soul something to express. Speech, this characteristic gift of man, this wonderful gift of God, polluted as it is by the sin and depravity of mankind, becomes by the Spirit of God purified, consecrated, and sanctified.

2. Speaking in foreign languages was a sign of the Holy Ghost. It was a holy speaking of holy things, a speaking of the mighty acts of God, not of the small doings of men; inasmuch as the holiness of the Spirit is expressed therein. It was a speaking in many and different dialects and languages; in which is revealed the comprehensive human destination of the Spirit of God for all nations, lands, and tongues. This speaking in foreign languages was not learned laboriously, or obtained by all sorts of expenditure of means and time, but was the free and pure gift of grace—as a token of the might and grace with which the Spirit of God works.

3. The fact that Jews out of all lands were witnesses of the outpouring of the Spirit, is a proof how in the judgments of God grace lies concealed, and how His punishments and chastisements still tend to pity. Israel, on account of its apostasy, had been dispersed among all lands, first in the East, and afterwards in the West. Now Jews and proselytes come out of these lands to Jerusalem, and were permitted to be the eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of the operations of the Holy Spirit, which contained a pledge of the grace of God in Christ, destined for all nations and languages. Thus the dispersion of the Jews in all parts of the world formed a bridge for the passage of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews out of every nation (ver. 5). O a wonderful and faithful God, who by the severest judgments on a disobedient people makes a way for the Gospel of our salvation! The Jewish people were, according to the divine threatenings, on account of their sins, dispersed among

the nations, and had learned their languages. Now the Lord uses this dispersion as a means to spread His word and the great salvation in Christ throughout the world. Whoever believingly comprehends this, he is enabled to say with sincerity: "I remembered Thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself," Ps. cxix. 52 (Apost. Past.).—It often happens that one is on a journey, or is engaged in a good work, and God blesses it so that it results to his salvation, Acts viii. 27 (Starke).—*Devout men.* God begins early something good in those who become truly converted, and makes a preparation for His work of grace (Starke).—*The upright fear of God is precious in His sight.* 1. It leads the willing obedient to the further guidance of God. 2. It is rewarded by higher gifts and graces. —"Whosoever hath, to him shall be given that he may have abundance." "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."—Not extensive knowledge, but honest piety and a sincere heart impart to thee a true preference.—*The dispersion of Israel a masterpiece of the divine government:* 1. As a just punishment for their sins; 2. as a powerful means of spreading the knowledge of the true God; 3. as an efficacious instrument for the spread of the Gospel.—The judgments of God during the day of grace are at the same time means of grace.—In God's hand there is no rod of correction which cannot also become a rod of mercy (Lechler).

Now when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded (ver. 6). The curiosity of people which, similarly as in the time of Christ and His apostles, is displayed in the present day, must, according to the example of the first witnesses of our Saviour, be employed to gain something for the kingdom of Christ. Wherever that kingdom truly penetrates and is purely preached in the power of God, there is excitement. And becoming terrified and confused, as well as the astonishment of persons hearing the Gospel which causes this excitement, is already beneficial. On the other hand, it may be affirmed to be not a good sign when everything proceeds quietly, and the delivery of the Gospel creates hardly any commotion (Apost. Past.).—How even the curiosity of men is employed by God to lead souls to His Son (Lechler).—The superiority of the Gospel to the law: at the giving of the law, the people fled; here, the multitude came together (Starke).—

Often salvation arises from an excitement, as the means of its diffusion.

And they all wondered (ver. 7). Wonder at what is great is a means which God employs in displaying to us His salvation (Lechler).—Wonder may indeed be the commencement of a saving impression of the divine word, but the end and aim must be adoring wonder of the divine grace and truth.—*Are not all these who speak Galileans?* A true witness of the truth will always, as here, permit himself to be lightly regarded as a Galilean. Thus it fared no better with David (Ps. iv. 6) and Paul (2 Cor. x. 10), yea, even with the Lord Himself (John i. 46).

How hear we every man in our own language, etc.? (vers. 8–11). Luke has the course of the Gospel in view in the order in which he introduces the representatives of the nations here collected.—To hear the mighty works of God spoken of, was nothing strange to Jewish ears. But those great works of God, whose praise the Holy Ghost now put into the hearts and mouths of the disciples, no ear had yet heard. The Jewish language is too narrow a vessel for their glorious greatness: the deeds of the world's Saviour must be published and celebrated in all the tongues of the world (Besser).—How worthy of thanks is the kindness of God, that we can read and hear the Gospel in our own language!—The great works of God are the chief contents of the Bible.—We cannot turn the divine gift of speech to a more worthy account than to speak of the things of God and His kingdom (Lechler).—*The thousand-tongued halleluiah of the world in honour of God.* 1. Begun on the morning of creation in the kingdom of nature. 2. Renewed at Pentecost in the kingdom of grace. 3. Perfected, but never finished, on the day of manifestation in the kingdom of glory.

And they were all amazed, etc. (ver. 12). Amazement is often the means of salvation. The reason of men must first become confounded and recognise its weakness, before God begins His work in them (Starke).—If the inquiry of wonder, What meaneth this? be converted into the inquiry of repentance, What must I do? then is the way of salvation entered upon (Leon. and Spieg.).

But others mocked (ver. 13). Although mockery is one of the saddest operations of satanic zeal against the kingdom of Christ,

yet it must not provoke the spirit of the calumniated teacher to cast away entirely such mockers, least of all to permit himself to be so irritated thereby, that he with sharp and sarcastic words should embitter yet more those persons who are deserving of pity. He should bear with them with a tender spirit, allure and retain them, in order that He might save some out of such a miserable multitude.—When one attentively considers the mockeries and blasphemies of Satan, it is ever observable that he, at such great works of the Lord, becomes as it were confused, and falls to blasphemies which have no foot to stand on, indeed, which are self-contradictory, as here: "These men are full of sweet wine" (Apost. Past.).—The world loves to blacken what is bright, and to draw to the dust what is elevated (Schiller).—There is often concealed behind this mockery, real despair: often in the heart of such a mocker a full conviction of the truth is inscribed; he is already convinced of the divinity of the Gospel, but he will not allow it to prevail; he will not come to the light, for he loves the darkness rather than the light; and therefore he tries to laugh and jest away his better convictions (Hofacker).—*How are we to secure ourselves against the offence which arises from a misconception of the holy?* 1. By careful maintenance of the fear of God and of divine things in our souls; 2. by a thorough knowledge of human depravity in ourselves and in others; 3. by the recollection of the contradiction and resistance which the deeds of God have found with many from the beginning (Lechler).—The Gospel, to the one a savour of life unto life, and to the other a savour of death unto death.—Christ is ever set for the fall and rising again of many.

The import of the pentecostal gift. 1. It is a sign for Israel. 2. It is a type of the lot of the Gentiles: (*a*) a type of the calling of all nations; (*b*) a type of the election of those who inquire after salvation; (*c*) a type of the rejection of those who mock at the great works of God. 3. The hope, trust, and confidence of true Christians (Harless).—*The outpouring of the Spirit upon the disciples of the Lord.* 1. What is necessarily implied in it. 2. The external signs under which the Spirit appeared. 3. The power which He immediately shewed in the disciples. 4. The effect which He produced upon the rest of the people (Langbein).—*The miracle of Pentecost.* 1. In the world, a mystery of foolishness: (*a*) What meaneth this? (*b*) These men are

full of sweet wine. 2. In Christ, a mystery for salvation: (*a*) A mystery—sudden, invisible, miraculous; (*b*) in Christ made known for salvation: made known—evidences: keeping together with one accord, prayer, devout conduct; for salvation—for all nations and times (Beck).—*The operations of the Spirit.* 1. How they take place. 2. What takes place through them (Kapff).—*The first founding of the Christian Church by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.* 1. How is it prepared? (*a*) Externally, by the fulfilment of the appointed time; (*b*) internally, by the apostles meeting together with one accord. 2. How does it take place? (*a*) Externally, by miraculous phenomena; (*b*) internally, by miraculous operations. 3. How is it understood by the multitude? (*a*) Externally, according to the startling form of the pentecostal testimony (mockery); (*b*) internally, according to the contents of the discourse (consternation) (Lisco).—*The outpouring of the Holy Ghost an image of the new birth.* 1. The praying congregation; 2. the sound from heaven; 3. the holy flames; 4. the preaching with new tongues (The same).—*The confused voices of the world opposed to the testimony of the Holy Ghost.* 1. "Are not all these Galileans?" They are offended at the person of the witnesses. 2. "How hear we each our own language?" They are startled at the sound of the truth in their own conscience. 3. "What meaneth this?" They distrust the issue of the ways of God. 4. "These men are full of sweet wine." They mistake the source of the operations of the Spirit. —*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.* 1. His disciples are for him too insignificant (ver. 7); 2. His testimony is to him too powerful (vers. 8–11); 3. His aim is to him too high (ver. 12); 4. His source is to him too deep (ver. 13).—*How differently the Divine operates on men according to their various dispositions.* 1. With the thoughtless, stupid wonder; with the thoughtful, adoring wonder. 2. With the guilty, dull terror; with the reconciled to God, holy joy. 3. With the godless, foolish mockery; with inquirers after salvation, wholesome consternation.—(See also the Homiletical Hints to the following section.)

C.

The Testimony of Peter. (Chap. ii. 14–36.)

CONTENTS.—To meet the mockery of the one, and to solve the doubts of the others, Peter stands up with the eleven, and explains to those assembled, whose attention he claims (ver. 14): 1. That the fact at which they wondered is not drunkenness, but the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel—the outpouring of the Spirit of God in the last days (vers. 15–21): 2. That Jesus of Nazareth, the Man of God, whom ye have slain, was raised of God, as must be the case according to the prophecies of David (vers. 22–32): 3. And that Jesus, exalted by God, has poured out the Spirit, of whose operations ye are witnesses: He whom ye have crucified is Lord and Messiah (vers. 33–36).

1. *The standing up of Peter.—His address to the hearers, and the explanation that the fact at which they wondered was not drunkenness, but the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel—the outpouring of the Spirit of God in the last days.*

CHAP. II. 14–21.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them: Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and attend to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, for it is yet but the third hour of the day; 16 But this is that which was spoken before by the prophet Joel: 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I shall pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall have dreams; 18 And on My servants and on My maid-servants I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy. 19 And I will do wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come; 21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Then Peter stood up.*—The apostles found themselves, by the wondering questions of the susceptible, and by the mockery of others, partly warranted and partly obliged to address the assembled multitude, and to render their testimony. Hitherto all the disciples of Jesus took part without distinction; but now

the twelve apostles stand up, mindful of the will and words of Jesus: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem." This standing up is very solemnly described: "Peter stood up with the eleven;"—he, as "the mouth of the disciples and the head of their choir" (Chrysostom), as their quickly-resolved, courageous, and eloquent spokesman, stood forward and took his position opposite to those standing around, σταθείς, yet not isolated, but surrounded with the eleven fellow-apostles, who, at least afterwards (vers. 37, 40), likewise spoke. Peter "lifted up his voice," in order to make himself heard by the thousands who stood there, and the joy of his conscience conferred on him strength and confidence. He spoke solemnly, distinctly, clearly, and intelligibly, not praising God in an ecstatic excitement of spirit, but rendering his testimony with self-possession; so that his whole attitude and demeanour, voice and words, manifested the most perfect sobriety.

2. *Ye men of Judea.*—Peter begins his discourse solemnly, and thus awakens within his hearers the expectation of something weighty and important. He addresses with simple dignity the Jews then present, and the dwellers in Jerusalem, and entreats their patient hearing and attentive consideration of his words. Peter doubtless addressed them in the Aramaic language, which was likewise understood by all.

3. *These are not drunken.*—Peter begins with the jeering remarks of some of the spectators, denies and refutes their slanderous supposition by pointing them to the early hour of the day; for the third hour (according to our reckoning, nine in the morning) was the first hour of prayer, corresponding to the morning sacrifice; and before this, especially on a feast-day, durst no Israelite taste anything. The mildness and moderation with which Peter deals with that observation is worthy of remark, and is as noble as it is prudent, dealing with it as the actual though erroneous impression of the people, and not as wicked mockery and blasphemy, spoken against their better knowledge. Whilst he speaks of the disciples in the third person, he does not intend, as De Wette imagines, to exclude himself and the other apostles from the number of those who spoke with tongues, as if that were some low kind of enthusiastic speech, of which the apostles were ashamed; but he only places himself, because he now speaks in a general manner, on the

stand-point of the unconcerned spectator, in order to testify the actual truth, whilst he defends all without exception, himself included.

4. *But this is that.*—A bare denial does not suffice for an answer, and would fail to make any favourable impression. In order to convince, we must not only say No, but also Yes, and be able to testify a truth. And this Peter does. He explains that the fact at which they wondered was nothing else than the fulfilment of the divine promise made by the prophet Joel (Joel ii.). There the prophet, in the words of God, after announcing severe judgments on the people, predicts a period of the grace of God in the general and abundant outpouring of His Spirit; and also a series of judgments on the enemies of God preceding the final judgment, from which, however, all the true servants of God would find preservation and salvation. In particular, God promises to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh; that is to say, not only upon individuals, but upon the whole human race without distinction of sex, age, or condition—"to pour out," as a gracious rain on all lands. To prophesy, to see visions, and to have dreams, are mentioned collectively as the effects of the Spirit of God, and indeed of an abundant and overflowing outpouring thereof. In youth the external senses are more susceptible, and in age the internal sense is more awakened; therefore visions are promised to the young and dreams to the old, which, however, is not to be understood exclusively. In the prophecy of Joel there are conjoined with the promise of the gracious gift of the Spirit, glances at the judgment upon the enemies of God and signs of the fearful last judgment—partly on earth, bloodshedding and conflagrations, and partly in heaven, eclipses of the sun and moon, and similar terrible appearances: these precede the great day of the Lord, with its decisions and final judgments. But from these overwhelming and destructive judgments of God on His enemies, deliverance and salvation are prepared for all those who "call upon His name,"—that is, who in humble obedience of faith attach themselves, in prayer, piety, and conduct, to God as He has manifested Himself. When the prophet speaks of the great day of the Lord, he has, without doubt, the Messianic period in view, although he does not name the Messiah. He speaks of the end of the world, which he is especially called on to describe according to its terrible side,—

the fearful coming judgments on the ungodly; but he has also words of precious promise for the pious and devout. Evidently, in this prophecy, periods far and widely separated from each other are comprehended; but it is, in general, a peculiarity of prophecy to view in one comprehensive glance what in the development is separated in point of time.—But how did Peter comprehend and employ the prophecy? As regards the expression, he has quoted the passage not literally, but freely in a way which partly follows the Septuagint; but even in the beginning he deviates from the original text, which also agrees with the Alexandrian translation, inserting "in the last days" instead of "afterwards," in order to denote more distinctly the period to which the prophecy points, answering to other prophetical passages. Further, the expression, "I will pour out of My Spirit," differs from the Hebrew, whilst it agrees with the Septuagint: Joel says, אֶת־רוּחִי. It is, however, pressing the partitive expression too far to understand it, with Starke, as a contrast to the entire fulness of the Spirit which is in Christ (Col. i. 19), or with Olshausen, as an indirect reference to the future outpouring of the complete fulness of the Spirit on the perfected Church: rather, the Spirit of God, as the collective fulness, is only distinguished from the outpouring of the same upon individuals. Further, Joel has in the Hebrew, "upon the servants and upon the handmaids," that is, slaves in the proper sense: Peter, as also the Septuagint, τοὺς δούλους μου, etc.; where the distinction of condition is not entirely set aside, but only it is put prominently forward that the slaves, on whom the Spirit is poured, must already be devout people—the servants of God.

When Peter (ver. 16) says, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," he indeed maintains that the prophecy is now fulfilled, yet not that it has here exclusively and in all points completely received its fulfilment, or that the fulfilment is limited to the present time. Peter has good reason for not abridging the prophetic passage after ver. 18, but adding also what follows: he places intentionally, as the background of his picture, the divine judgments, indeed the final judgment, in order to display the fate of the enemies of God, and thus the more impressively to point souls to Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Deliverer from so wretched a fate.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. What is meant by the *last days*?—Peter recognises in the outpouring of the Spirit the fulfilment of that prophecy concerning the last time, and yet, since then, centuries, indeed almost two thousand years, have passed away. How does this agree? First, it is evident that the last days are not a mere point of time, but an entire period, which comprehends a series of times, and thus also a development. Secondly, it is to be considered that every prophecy of the Old Testament has its aim and end in the Messianic time, in which the advent of the Anointed forms the centre-point; and, accordingly, the manifestation of Jesus Christ and what refers to it is in the New Testament regarded as the beginning of the end (see Heb. i. 2). And although the disciples of Jesus may not have imagined that so many centuries would elapse before the last end would follow "the beginning of the end;" yet there lies in this view the great and incontestable truth, that Christ is the turning point of the world's history, that His appearance on earth is the end of the old world, the fulfilment of its hopes and longings, the aim of the struggles of humanity, the realization of the gracious plan of God, and that henceforth only the gradual manifestation and accomplishment of the work of redemption to its fulfilment, and to the second advent of Him who once came, is to be looked for. And the more faith dives humbly and intelligently into the contemplation of the oneness of the person of Jesus Christ, and of the all-sufficient fulness of His work, the more must also the truth of that contemplation of time be acknowledged.

2. Whilst Peter sees the prophecy of Joel fulfilled in the outpouring of the Spirit, and especially in the indiscriminate communication of the gifts of the Spirit to persons of different age, condition, and sex, he testifies *the adjustment of contrasts among men through Christ.* These contrasts stand sharpest out in Heathenism, that is, in fallen humanity outside of revelation; as, for example, the contrast between man and woman, with the oppression of the female sex; the contrast between master and slave, with the denial of man's dignity and rights among the latter; and also the contempt and ill-treatment of the aged among certain nations. Within the Old Covenant, the law of God aimed at the adjustment of these

contrasts, as, for example, between master and servant; whilst yet the female sex in the Mosaic religion came not to their full dignity, as it was merely the male sex who were partakers of the sign of the covenant; and only the promise and prophecy of the Messianic period promised more. It is only the Gospel of Christ which has brought about the complete adjustment; for only in Christ has complete humanity appeared, because He was the God-man. And it is precisely the gift of the Spirit of the Father and of the Son which adjusts all existing contrasts and distinctions among men. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 28.

3. Grace and judgment, judgment and grace—are the truths in which both the prophecy of the prophets and the preaching of the apostles move. The glance at the great and terrible day of the Lord, that is, at the final judgment, makes the renewing and at length saving grace of God truly dear and precious, and incites to the saving invocation of the Lord. The redemption in Christ—for this especially Peter has in view—receives its full light and its inexpressible value only by a look into the depths of destruction and condemnation out of which Christ alone rescues us. "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment." Jas. ii. 13.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Peter stood up (ver. 14). Peter sitting had received the gift of the Spirit, as he along with the other apostles had been as it were gloriously entertained at the table of God. Now he stood up; for the field of contest discloses itself, when he must use the strength received. But evidently the apostle in his defence did not concern himself chiefly about the honour and reputation of himself and his fellow-apostles, but about the honour of his crucified Saviour, and about the salvation of his hearers, yea, even of his mockers. If he were yet the old Peter, who at the passion of the Saviour smote with the sword, his address would have sounded very differently. But the wild fire of nature was extinguished by the heavenly fire from above, the rash tongue was curbed by the anointing of the Spirit, so that tenderness was united with courage, and wisdom with zeal (After Apost. Past.).—Behold here the wonderful power of the Holy Ghost! He makes of fugitives, resolute men; of the deniers of

Christ, earnest confessors; of the fearful, heroes who encounter thousands with the sword of the Spirit; of unlearned fishermen, eloquent orators and the reformers of the world (Starke).—When the honour of God is attacked and blasphemed, it is not permitted to be silent. The greater the calumny, so much the greater discretion must be employed in the refutation, only stating the case, but not retorting abuse and mockery.—The Holy Ghost not only converts lions into lambs, but also lambs into lions.—*Peter stood up with the eleven.* At first all speak with tongues, then are silent, and instead of all, Peter stands up with his discourse; so now, in our Church service, at first all sing together, and proclaim in the general hymn the mighty acts of God, and after that one preaches. Therefore, as the Holy Ghost at Pentecost caused the disciples to be silent, in order that Peter might deliver his discourse; so, not many years afterwards, He withdrew all those extraordinary gifts from the Church, and left only the office which preaches the reconciliation, and ordered His gifts accordingly for a testimony that He will be found in this office in the Church (Münkel).—*Ye men of Judea.* Not with the word of judgment will he smite down the blasphemers, but he wishes to rescue them out of their blindness, and gain them for the truth by a calm and kind discourse.

These are not drunken, as ye suppose (ver. 15). Peter confutes shortly the ridicule, for he would not long detain himself and his hearers with such miserable accusations; and he does so with great gentleness. It might be thought that it were not too harsh if he had said, Your tongues are kindled of hell, and your hearts are possessed by the devil, the father of liars. Yet he only says, As ye suppose,—Ye are in error. And this availed more than if he had uttered the most cutting words, and so irritated them the more. Good and holy behaviour is ever the best apology of the children of God, who thus with well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men (Apost. Past.). —There exists a yet deeper sense in these words by their position: "Not as ye suppose, are these drunken." Certainly we are drunken by the rich gifts of the house, by the sweet wine of the marriage of the Lamb commenced; for to the disciples the outpouring of the Holy Ghost was truly a sweet, divine wine which the Lord had poured out to them, that they might drink it with Him in His kingdom (Leonh. and Spieg.).

This is that which was spoken before by the prophet Joel (ver. 16). By this the apostle especially entreats the attention of the devout Jews who expected the fulfilment of the prophets. They were to hear and learn that on this, the third hour of the day, an answer is returned to all the prayers which their fathers offered up, from the time that the third hour was sanctified to Israel as the hour of the morning sacrifice (Besser).—Only that teacher is in a position rightly to explain the word of God, who is himself a partaker of the Holy Ghost. Then flow real edifying explanations when one himself possesses the thing which is so often testified in the writings of the prophets. Davidica non intelligit qui non Davidica habet (Apost. Past.).—God's word is an unfailing light to our ways. Even illumination by the Spirit does not make the word unnecessary. The apostle, filled with the Spirit, rests on the prophetic word and not on his own illumination.—The word and the Spirit, how united: 1. The word is given by the Spirit, 1 Pet. i. 11; 2. the Spirit teaches us to understand, interpret, and apply the word (Lechler).

In the last days (vers. 17, 18). The last days are all the days of the New Testament, and these days are already far advanced (Bengel).—*I will pour out*, not in drops as under the Old Covenant, but in streams: "which He has shed on us abundantly," Tit. iii. 6.—*Upon all flesh.* The Word must become flesh in order that the Holy Ghost may be poured upon all flesh, and convert what is carnal in us into spiritual (Starke).—This is the glorious promise of God in which all believers under the New Covenant have comforted themselves. For this happened not only on the day of Pentecost, but is daily fulfilled by the word and sacrament; so that a spiritual Pentecost is always with believers, and ceases not in the Christian Church, so long as the word and sacrament endure (Joh. Arnd).—*And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.* As the foreign tongues fulfilled the prophecy of the prophet before the eyes and the ears of the multitude; so likewise the prophetic word represented the crowd of the disciples united by faith in Jesus Christ, on whom, without distinction of sex, age, or condition, the Spirit was poured: your sons and your daughters, young men and elders, etc. (Besser).—*To prophesy, to see visions, to have dreams.* These three chief forms of the Spirit's operation in the Old Testament, are glorified and united in the New Testament entrance of the Spirit

into the heart, in which He makes His abode. "For what are all other gifts together, compared with this gift—that the Spirit of God Himself comes down into our hearts, yea, into our bodies, and dwells in us, rules, guides, and directs us? Thus, as regards this expression of the prophet, prophecy, vision, and dreams are one thing, namely, the knowledge of God in Christ, which the Holy Ghost by the word of the Gospel kindles and inflames" (Luther).—God promises and gives not everything to all, but to each something that is peculiar: to the sons and daughters to prophesy, to the young men to see visions, etc.—*Unity and distinction of the gifts of the Spirit.* 1. Unity in their origin, contents, and design. 2. Distinction in their form, degrees, and operations. The Holy Ghost is the only true adjusting power in humanity (Lechler).

And I will show wonders (vers. 19 and 20). Either baptized with fire, or consumed with fire. God is willing to baptize all flesh with His Spirit: whoever rejects this baptism is condemned already; to him the pentecostal baptism denotes the storm, and the pentecostal fire the flames of judgment (Isa. x. 17); and the counterpart of the pentecostal day of grace will be exhibited to him on the great and public day of the Lord (Rev. xvi. 14). The wonders in heaven above compelling attention, and the signs on earth beneath, consoling and evident to believers, will ring in this day. These signs of wrath began to show themselves when Israel slew its King upon the cross: then the sun was turned into darkness. Yet more powerfully did they occur at the destruction of Jerusalem: blood, fire, and vapour of smoke filled the whole city. The appearance of the moon became blood-red over the pools of blood in the streets, and the sun has ever since withdrawn its wholesome shining from that desolated land. Later still, the crescent of Mahomet has arisen in blood over the lands on which once the sun of salvation shone brightly, and the earth, polluted by the service of mammon, is ripe for the execution of that saying: "The strong shall be as tow, and his work as a spark, and both shall burn together, and none shall quench them" (Isa. i. 31), (Besser).—God joins punishments to His gifts of grace: if one despises the grace, then follows the wrath.—Before God causes His judgments to break forth, He warns and arouses men by His wonders to repentance (Starke).—Amid all the judgments which befall the world, the word of the

Lord goes forth in the Church; therefore may and should the believing children of God, amid all the tempests which gather over the Church, be comforted and lift up their heads, Ps. xlvi. 3 (Apost. Past.).—God exhausts Himself, so to speak, for the good of men. He sends His Son and pours out His Spirit, that is to say, all His treasures. How terrible is the day of the Lord, when we will have to give an account to God of the blood of His Son, and of all the gifts of His Spirit! (Quesnel).

Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (ver. 21). When there is trouble, think on the compassion of God, Hab. iii. 2; Mal. iii. 17.—The whole Church consists of people who were saved from misery, of rebels who have obtained pardon.—How great the goodness of God to have made the way of salvation so easy, having joined everything to calling on the name of the Lord! Acts xvi. 31; Rom. x. 14 (Starke).—Although true contrition of heart in godly sorrow for sin is essential for salvation, yet it is properly faith, the calling on the name of the Lord, by which we are justified and saved: this is essential from the first beginning of conversion to the completion of our course (Apost. Past.).—To save is the first living act of the Church, and the first act of the Church is the whole of its life—one act. When the floods of judgment broke over Jerusalem, they lifted up and conveyed farther the vessel of Christ's Church, bore her to the shores of the Gentile world: there she has thrown out her anchor, and with the anchor the rope of salvation, which is brought near to all: "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of Jesus Christ shall be saved." Whosoever! "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Whosoever! And whoever hears it, let him throw out farther the rope of salvation in his own house, in the houses and streets of poverty: let him assist that it may be thrown out among the nations who yet languish in the black night of Heathenism. Do we quarrel with the word of the Lord, because of the signs of Joel which have not yet come to pass? O let us praise the patience of God! The friendly sun of God, which has retained its shining until the call came even to our fathers. The patient sun, which will retain it until the dilatory crew of Christianity have turned the vessel to the last unvisited souls, and proclaimed: "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Thus will the rescue-call of the Church sound

until the last hour, and then louder than ever. When the waves of the last agony of a submerging world break, yet once more the call of vast and infinite compassion: Whosoever calls shall be saved. This is the Church's life-act from the beginning to the end (Zezschwitz).—*The calling on the Lord.* 1. A fruit of faith; 2. a root of salvation (Lechler).

On the whole section.—The outpouring of the Holy Spirit. 1. A witness of the truth of Scripture; 2. an admonition on the severity of these last days; 3. a consolation amid the fights and sorrows of the time (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The Christian in contest with unbelieving scorners.* 1. He confesses the divine truth with power and joyfulness. 2. He suffers not himself to be irritated, but shows the meekness of love, which would willingly rescue the erring. 3. He fights not with carnal weapons of worldly power and human wisdom, but with the two-edged sword of the divine word.—*What is essential to a joyful and blessed testimony?* 1. A divine call; 2. the anointing of the Spirit; 3. a good conscience; 4. the strong foundation of Scripture (Lechler.)—*How ought a Christian to act in his justification against false accusations?* 1. Openly and frankly; 2. thoroughly and convincingly; 3. meekly and full of love, which suffers not itself to be embittered.—*How ought we, as the disciples of Christ, to behave when the Holy Ghost is blasphemed?* 1. To lift up our voices, whenever an opportunity is afforded; 2. to oppose to the blasphemies God's word and promise in meekness and love; 3. to pray earnestly that the Lord may pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh (Langbein).—*The wonderful power of the pentecostal Spirit, as displayed in the building of the first Christian Church.* 1. A strong bond of union, with every variety of the component parts; 2. a moderate sobriety, along with an overflowing inspiration; 3. the modest simplicity of children, along with the conquering power of men; 4. true love to their own nation, along with an expansive philanthropy (W. Hofacker).—*The holy pentecostal Spirit, as the almighty Renewer of mankind.* 1. The new creative breath which He breathes. 2. The new spiritual language which He makes known. 3. The new separation of life which He calls forth.—*The language of the Holy Ghost.* 1. How it causes itself to be heard. 2. How it is heard: to (*a*) bewilderment, (*b*) offence, and (*c*) salvation (Staudt).—*These are not drunken, as ye suppose:* a defensive

weapon for the witnesses of the truth against the mockers of the holy. For, 1. Drunkenness (whether the bodily of the drunkard, or the spiritual of the fanatic) clouds the spirit; but in the righteous the spirit is free, and the sight open to the secrets of the word and ways of God. 2. Drunkenness unchains the passions; but the righteous are full of meekness and self-possession. 3. Drunkenness flies away as a vapour; but in the righteous a gentle fire of faith, love, and hope glows, which all the floods of opposition are not able to quench.—*The Holy Spirit of God is the only true general spirit of humanity:* for He removes all separating barriers, 1. of age and sex; 2. of station and education; 3. of nations and generations (vers. 16–18).—*How in the light of Pentecost every secret thing is brought to light.* 1. The secrets of the heart: the scorners; Peter and the disciples. 2. The secrets of Scripture: its promises; its threatenings. 3. The ways of God: in the present; in the future.—(See also the Homiletical Hints to the two following sections.)

2. *The continuation of the speech of Peter. He shows that Jesus of Nazareth, notwithstanding the Jews have crucified Him, is, in virtue of His resurrection and ascension (in consequence of which He has poured out the Holy Ghost), both Lord and Messiah.*

CHAP. II. 22–36.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by mighty works, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know; 23 Him, being delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by the hand of lawless men have crucified and slain. 24 Him has God raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be overcome by it. 25 For David saith concerning Him: "I saw the Lord always before me; for He is at my right hand, that I may not be moved. 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; yea also, my flesh will rest in hope: 27 Because Thou wilt not leave my soul in the kingdom of the dead, neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: Thou wilt fill me with joy before Thy countenance." 29 Men and brethren, I may freely speak to you of the patriarch David: He is dead and buried, and his grave is with us to this day. 30 As now he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath, that One of the fruit of his loins should sit upon his throne; 31 He, in view of the future, has spoken of the resurrection of the Messiah, that He

was not left in the kingdom of the dead, and His flesh did not see corruption. 32 This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He has poured forth this, which ye see and hear. 34 For David is not yet ascended into heaven; but he saith, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, 35 Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has constituted this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, Lord and Christ.

Ver. 22. The *καί* before *αὐτοί*, which the textus receptus has, is rightly expunged by Lachmann and Tischendorf, according to A.B.C.D.E., the fathers, and ancient versions.

Ver. 23. *Λαβόντες* after *ἔκδοτον* is an addition for the sake of the sense; but on the ground of A.B.C., fathers, and ancient versions, must be regarded as spurious.—*Χειρός* is to be preferred to the plural *χειρῶν*, as it is attested by important MSS., and is the more difficult reading.

Ver. 24. *Θανατόν* is to be preferred to *ᾅδου*, which is attested only by one MS. and by some versions and fathers.

Ver. 27. Instead of *εἰς ᾅδου*, Lachmann and Tischendorf, after several MSS. and fathers, read *εἰς ᾅδην*; but this is probably a later correction.

Ver. 30. Before *καθίσαι* the textus receptus inserts *τὸ κατὰ σάρκα ἀναστήσειν τὸν Χριστόν*, words which are awanting in the most important MSS., and are certainly a later insertion.

Ver. 31. To the usual reading, *οὐ κατελείφθη ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ . . . οὐδέ*, the following reading, *οὔτε ἐγκατελείφθη εἰς Ἅιδου οὔτε*, has been preferred by Tischendorf, Bornemann, and Lachmann. The former reading appears to be formed from ver. 27.

Ver. 33. *Νῦν* before *ὑμεῖς* has been properly expunged by the latest critics, after the testimony of numerous MSS., versions, and fathers: it is evidently an addition for the sake of perspicuity.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Ye men of Israel.*—Hitherto Peter had placed the occurrence of the day in the light of the prophetic word, and had shown it to be the fulfilment of the great promises of God, which have also their severe and alarming side. After the minds of the hearers were thus earnestly and devoutly disposed, he proceeds to the principal part of the subject, and renders a public and clear testimony, which at the same time took hold on the conscience, that Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified by His people, but raised and exalted by God, according to the promises, has poured forth the Spirit, and is both Lord and Messiah. He accordingly keeps steadily in view the event of the day; the gift of the Holy Ghost is the golden

thread which runs throughout his whole discourse; but yet his discourse, because it must be a missionary address, assumes the appearance of a testimony to Jesus, who as the Crucified, but now the Risen and Exalted One, is both Lord and Redeemer. Peter therefore, before entering upon this, the chief part of his discourse, turns himself to his hearers with a renewed request for their attention.

2. *Jesus of Nazareth.*—Peter in naming Jesus describes His person as notably distinguished by God, and indeed so that the Israelites might have learned to know Him as a person eminently accredited by God (*ἀποδεδειγμένον εἰς ὑμᾶς—ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν καθὼς καὶ αὐτοὶ οἴδατε*). It is obviously his intention by this already to aim at the conscience, and to make his hearers feel the horrible injustice of their conduct to Jesus, of which he directly proceeds to speak.

3. *Him have ye.*—Peter places the sufferings of Jesus in a twofold light—the human and the divine. On the human side, he represents the sufferings of Jesus as a complicated act, in which different persons co-operated: the chief persons, to whom belongs the guilt of the murder of Jesus, are the Israelites (*προσπήξαντες ἀνείλατε*); the instrumental persons, by whose hands the nailing to the cross and the crucifixion were performed, are the Gentiles (*ἄνομοι*) who have not the law (of Moses), that is to say, the Romans—not only the Roman soldiers, but also the Roman governor; and, lastly, there is with *ἔκδοτον* at least an allusion to the treason of Judas. But the apostle, in saying to all his hearers without distinction, "Ye have slain Him" (whereas, without doubt, there were many who were not present at the sufferings of Jesus eight or nine weeks before), evidently affirms that the crucifixion of Jesus was an act of the nation as such, and therefore that there took place a national act and guilt.—But, in order to answer the natural inquiry, How could this have happened if Jesus was such a man of God? and to remove the offence which the cross must create, Peter adverts to the divine side of the transaction, and says, all this occurred according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God: in other words, it was not an uncontrolled act of human wickedness; that could not have gone so far, were it not likewise the will of God, who not only foreknew all this, but also had predetermined it. Thus, then, in the

sufferings and death of Christ, a divine counsel was accomplished.

4. *Whom God has raised.*—Though the declaration of Peter concerning the sufferings and death of Christ is rich in contents, yet it is expressed in few words, only in a single verse (ver. 23). On the other hand, Peter treats of the resurrection of Jesus in not less than nine verses; from which it is at once evident that it was this most important fact which he held to be his chief task to testify. What Peter says of the resurrection of Christ, has a twofold character. First, he bears simple witness to it, in his own name and in that of the apostles, as an event which actually took place; and this rests evidently, although it is not expressly said, on the circumstance that they had seen the Lord after His resurrection, and were therefore eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of His resurrection-life. Secondly, the apostle views the resurrection of Christ in the light of prophecy as a fact which was predicted by David, and must be fulfilled in Jesus. The former coincides with the assertion, "Jesus is risen indeed!" His resurrection is a matter of fact. The latter goes a step further, and affirms, Jesus must have risen, His resurrection was necessary. This is evidently contained in the expression, *οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν*, etc. Here Peter (ver. 24), without doubt, employed the expression חֶבְלֵי־מָוֶת in the Aramaic language, which denotes the snares and traps with which death seizes and retains its booty. But Luke (after the example of the Septuagint, which thought on חֶבֶל, חֶבְלִים) has put *ὠδῖνες θανάτου*; and certainly not in the Hebraistic sense of the words, "cords or bands" (Olshausen), but in the sense "pains," "birth-pangs," and this inasmuch as a new life was born from death. The interpretation that death itself travails with pain, until the dead One was raised (Meyer), is ingenious; but it is much more natural to refer the pains to Jesus Himself, inasmuch as the condition in the kingdom of the dead after the moment of death, when *διαφθορά* threatens, is conceived as a painful condition.—But what does the additional clause, "It was not possible that He should be overcome of death," import? Both ancient and modern interpreters explain it directly, as if Peter would say: In virtue of the nature of Jesus Christ it was impossible, for the Son has life in Himself (Olshausen). Or, It was impossible in respect, 1. of God the Father, 2. of the Son

as the eternal Son of God, and 3. of death, which could have no lasting claim on the Holy One and the Prince of life (Gebrand van Leeuwen). But here the chief thing affirmed, and according to the context the only thing, is that Jesus could not possibly be overcome of death because it was prophesied, and the divine promise must be fulfilled. This is the most logical meaning, and does not exclude but includes the idea, that the victorious power and fulness of life of the Anointed of God, adverted to in the prophecy, is the internal ground both of the promise and its fulfilment.

5. *I saw the Lord always.*—The prophecy to which Peter appeals (Ps. xvi. 8–11) contains the earnest expression of joyful trust in a devout mind, when body and soul rejoice in the living God, and even in the sight of death are certain of an eternal and blessed life. The words, following the Septuagint, are quoted fully. Ver. 25 expresses the intimate and true life-fellowship of David with God, inasmuch as he has the Lord continually before him, and He stands on his right hand to help and uphold him. Therefore ver. 26 expresses the joy in God and the confident trust of the whole man (*καρδία, γλῶσσα,* instead of בְּבוֹדִי, *σάρξ*), on account of which he is certain (ver. 27) that he would not fall a prey to death, so that his soul must remain in the kingdom of the dead, or the beloved of God must corrupt in the grave. On the contrary (ver. 28), he hopes by the divine guidance and love to obtain life in the fulness of joy of God's fellowship.—Now what David in these words of glorious confidence has spoken, the apostle refers to Jesus Christ. He premises that David speaketh *εἰς αὐτόν*, that is, not "of Jesus," but "concerning Him." In vers. 29–31 he minutely explains this, after he has premised that he might speak freely of David: and that because those who were captivated with the sanctity of David might in what follows find a detraction from this sanctity, and thus be offended. Therefore the apostle, to obviate this, and to gain a more favourable hearing, remarks that one may be permitted to say this (*ἐξὸν* sc. *ἐστὶν* not *ἔστω*), because it is an undeniable fact. But in order to show that he himself esteemed David highly, he calls him *πατριάρχης*, that is, the honoured progenitor of the royal house, out of which, according to the promise, the Messiah must come. Therefore, says Peter, it is a matter of fact, not

only that David is dead and buried, but also that his sepulchre is with us to this day; thus giving us to understand that David's body fell a prey to corruption. Accordingly, David, who was inspired by the Spirit of God, and had received the promise on oath that God would establish a descendant of his upon his royal throne, has, with a prophetic glance into the future, spoken of the resurrection of Christ, that He was not left in the kingdom of the dead, and that His flesh was not a prey to corruption.—Ὅτι οὐ κατελείφθη (ver. 31), "that He was not left," gives the contents of the prophetic expression directly, and is not to be understood as = εἰς ἐκεῖνο ὅτι (Meyer); for the former construction is simpler, and the objection taken to that construction, that in that case εἶπε ought to have been used instead of ἐλάλησε, does not apply, because ἐλάλησε is proximately connected with the words περὶ τῆς—Χριστοῦ: besides, we should in that view of the construction expect γάρ or some similar particle in ver. 32.

But how are we psychologically, according to the meaning of the apostle, to understand David's prophecy? Was David, when he speaks in the first person, and evidently appears to speak of himself, in fact not speaking in his own name, but in the name of the Messiah? The Psalm itself does not give the slightest indication of this. And Peter also does not maintain that David spoke, with the exclusion of his own person, wholly and entirely of Christ. It is entirely consistent with the sense of the apostolic words, to suppose that David certainly in the first place expressed his own hopes of life on the ground of living fellowship with God. Peter certainly insists on this, that David, in virtue of the inspiration of God's Spirit who was in him, has expressed an expectation, which in its full sense was not fulfilled in David, but in the Anointed of the Lord, promised to him, who is David's descendant and successor to his throne. The apostle certainly does not assert how clear and conscious the foreseeing and prophetic look of David to Jesus Christ and His resurrection might have been.

Peter, in applying the words of David (Ps. xvi. 10) directly to the resurrection of Jesus, asserts not only that His body remained unaffected by corruption, but also that Jesus went into the kingdom of the dead, yet did not remain there (ver. 31).—

From the prophecy Peter returns to the simple testimony of the apostles concerning the resurrection of Jesus.

6. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted.*—The apostle's statement proceeds historically from the resurrection of Jesus to His ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit, that is, to the present moment. "Jesus is by the right hand of God exalted," namely, to heaven, to divine power and glory. *Τῇ δεξιᾷ* is not to be rendered "to the right hand of God,"—the grammar and the New Testament language do not permit of this rendering,—but, "by the right hand." Peter lays stress on this, that Jesus, abased and slain by the crime and deed of men, has been raised and exalted by the favour and almighty power of God.—Further, Peter says Jesus has received the Holy Ghost, promised by the Father, in order to impart Him, and has in consequence poured forth this which ye see and hear—that power whose operations ye perceive. The apostle here again appeals to prophecy for the ground of his testimony. David has, it is admitted, not ascended into heaven, as Elias; and yet he said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand" (Ps. cx. 1). Peter, to whom, without doubt, the question of Jesus (Matt. xxii. 41) suggested itself, supposes that this scripture,—wherein the seat at the right hand of God, that is, the communication of the divine power and glory, is promised to the Messiah,—points to Jesus.

7. *Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that this Jesus is the Christ.*—This is the practical conclusion of the discourse; with this Peter sums up all that he has said. This knowledge (*γινωσκέτω*) follows with certainty (*ἀσφαλῶς*) from the preceding propositions; but this conviction is likewise intended to awaken grief, sorrow, and repentance, because Israel had crucified Him who is constituted the Messiah, and is exalted of God: in short, the apostle here seeks to persuade his hearers; for the knowledge which he would produce is a practical knowledge, that is, the recognition of Jesus as the Lord to the obedience of faith: and indeed such a recognition was the duty of all the people (*πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ*), especially as they had sinned grievously against Jesus. Therefore the words "whom ye have crucified" are removed to the end, to serve as a sting which should cleave to their souls, until it is drawn out by conversion and the forgiveness of sins.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The person of Jesus, in this first apostolic discourse, appears both according to its human and according to its divine side, but yet it is chiefly described according to the human side. For although the dignity of Jesus in His life and works, in His death on the cross, in His resurrection, ascension, and heavenly glory and activity, is constantly and clearly brought prominently forward; yet the divine element appears therein rather as bestowed: "what God did" (ver. 22); "God has raised Him up" (vers. 24, 32), not Christ is risen; "by the right hand of God exalted" (ver. 33), not ascended; yea, it is expressly said, "God hath made Him both Lord and Messiah" (ver. 36). There is no single positive indication that Jesus is originally the Son of God, has life in Himself, has been from eternity God, etc. But there is nothing here that should give offence, as if the notion of the divinity of Christ had only arisen at a later period and was void of original truth. Nor is it even necessary to have recourse to the opinion, that Peter and the other apostles, in whose name he speaks, have, out of consideration for their hearers, in virtue of an accommodation (even if allowable), been purposely silent of that truth, in order first to bring them to an acknowledgment of the Messiahship of Jesus, and then afterwards to disclose to them the deeper truths. But it arises from the nature of the case and the character of religious knowledge, that notwithstanding the clear testimony of Jesus concerning Himself, yet the personal insight of the apostles, and their conviction of the divinity of the Redeemer, grew only gradually; and this increase proceeded in a natural manner, so that their knowledge advanced from the appearance in time to the eternal essence, from the chief facts to the chief truths, from the outward to the inward, from the lower to the higher.

2. This ratio in their knowledge is seen, in like manner, with regard to the sufferings and death of Jesus. The apostle elucidates the passion of the Lord, that it was to be recognised as the guilty deed of the Jewish people, and also as foreseen and determined by God. On the other hand, he makes no mention of the true reason why Jesus should die, and especially that His sufferings and death were an act of reconciliation and propitiation—a saving act. And we are not justified in maintain-

ing that he was purposely silent, because the address was not a doctrinal discourse, but only a missionary sermon, a simple testimony of the faith. The truth rather is, that the apostles in this matter also had not yet necessarily been led into the whole truth. What Peter testifies is the truth, but it is not the whole and complete truth—not yet followed up in all its depths and heights.

So also as regards the resurrection. The apostle says that it was not possible that Jesus should be overcome of death; in other words, he maintains the necessity of His resurrection. But he means only that the resurrection of the Messiah is predicted in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and that therefore, because God is true and faithful, it must have taken place. But, on the other hand, on the truth that Jesus, in virtue of His dignity and of the indwelling life and victorious power of His person, must finally have overcome death, that is to say, on the inherent and essential necessity of His resurrection,—Peter does not say a single word. He testifies the truth, but yet not with a full, penetrating, and comprehensive insight into its nature. Thus in this we see the progressive nature of divine revelation and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in His gracious operations, who does not place the disciples at once, as by magic, in the possession of all truth, but leads them to it gradually, and step by step.

3. *Christ in the kingdom of the dead.*—Peter refers to the prophecy (Ps. xvi. 10) as fulfilled in Jesus, and maintains that Jesus was in Hades, yet did not remain there (erat in inferno, non est relictus in inferno: Bengel). And this truth requires the less to be settled by an appeal to the Old Testament representation, as the same apostle in his first Epistle (1 Pet. iii. 18) refers to the fact in an entirely doctrinal manner. Here in our passage the stress is laid upon this, that Jesus has submitted fully and truly, but not permanently, to the law and destiny of death. He has shared in the transition state between the earthly life and the resurrection life of eternity, and thus "nothing human has remained strange to Him." On the other hand, the resurrection of Jesus is the more decidedly a victory, the more completely He has Himself experienced the condition of death. Certainly the special object, served by the descent into the kingdom of the dead, came to light only at a later period.

4. It is worthy of remark that Jesus, exalted by the glorious power of God, Himself received the promised Spirit in

order to impart Him. Hence it is evident that the exalted Redeemer was not able, in virtue of an originally inherent fulness and authority, to impart the Holy Spirit. But it was a special step of the exaltation of Jesus, that He should receive the promise of the Holy Ghost. It appertains to the perfect humanity of the Redeemer, that not only during His earthly life He grew and waxed strong in spirit (Luke ii. 40), but also that in the state of exaltation, He received what He did not formerly possess, namely, the fulness of the Spirit, to be poured out upon His people.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God (ver. 22.) It is evident that what lay chiefly at the heart of the apostle, was to glorify Jesus Christ among his hearers. For this purpose he speaks both of the humiliation and of the exaltation of the Saviour; and although he intends to represent Jesus in His lowest state of humiliation, yet he gives us to understand how God, by the astonishing miracles which He performed before His sufferings, bore witness to Him, that He was the true Messiah and the Saviour of the world. We ought never to forget how exalted Jesus was even in His state of humiliation (Apost. Past.).—A servant of Christ is in this also conformed to his Head, that when the Lord brings him into suffering, He first authenticates him as His servant in the consciences of men, even of His enemies (The same).—God, with His Son, draws near to men, in order that men may draw near to God (Starke).

Him being delivered up, ye have taken (ver. 23). After Peter had reminded the Jews how God had done great things to Jesus and through Him, he strikes yet more powerfully at their conscience by reminding them of what evil things they had done to Jesus.—Although not all those who at the third hour of the day of Pentecost mocked the apostles, had joined on the third hour of the day of the crucifixion in the cry, Crucify Him, yet the guilt of blood pressed upon all who were not freed from it by repentance. Yea, even we ourselves must acknowledge, "I and my sins, which are more in number than the sand, have caused Thee Thy sufferings and the sad host of pangs"[1] (Besser).

Him God hath raised (ver. 24). After he had placed before their conscience how heavily their hand had sinned against the

[1] From a German hymn.

Lord's Anointed, he shows them what the hand of God had done to and for Him, the Crucified. The blacker their guilt, so much the more dazzling the glory of the Redeemer, abased indeed by them, but crowned by the Father with glory and honour.—Christ the humbled and the exalted, the man with the crown of thorns and the victorious Prince and King of glory,—both must be displayed before the people.—Until this hour the disciples had kept to themselves the secret of the resurrection of Jesus; but now the promised Spirit of testimony had come upon them, and Peter stands up as the first public witness of the resurrection (Besser).—*And has loosed the pains of death.* Death is only a band which God can easily loose; therefore fear not death (Starke).—If the bands of Jesus are rent asunder, so also are mine, for we are united together (Lindheim).—The joy of the risen Saviour is to be compared with the joy of a mother who, after having endured the pangs of labour, rejoices that a man is born into the world; for we are by His resurrection begotten again unto a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3 (Apost. Past.).—*Because it was not possible that He should be overcome of it.* For He was not the game which belongs to death's trap; therefore He has gone through it, and has torn the net in pieces, so that it can no longer hold any Christian.—Death is swallowed up in life, has disappeared and never rises; life rises up, obtains the victory, lifts its hands, and exclaims, Victory, victory! (Luther).—*The testimony of God for Jesus.* 1. In the miracles of the Lord Himself. 2. In His resurrection and exaltation. 3. In the gift of the Holy Ghost.—*The counsel of God and the deed of men.* 1. In apparent contradiction. 2. In real unison.—There is no uncontrolled power of human wickedness and sin.—*The scriptural doctrine of a collective crime.* 1. Its ground. 2. Its punishment. 3. Its remission and forgiveness for individuals.—*The resurrection* of Christ a witness of the 1. omnipotence, 2. faithfulness, and 3. compassion of God.

For David saith of Him, etc. (vers. 25–28). Like as our faith directed backwards embraces the saving acts of God in Christ, so the faith of the righteous in the Old Covenant stretching forwards has embraced the same saving acts.—*I foresaw the Lord always before me.* Those who here have the Lord always before their face shall hereafter stand before His face; those who have the Lord at their right hand in this world shall likewise at

the great day be placed at His right hand (Starke).—*Therefore doth my heart rejoice.* Severe battles being won make the joy of victory always the greater.—No one can rightly rejoice in heart, unless he has God before his eyes.—If our Redeemer has by His resurrection pressed into an endless life, He has thus paved the way to us (Starke).—The kingdom of God is even here below joy in the Holy Ghost: what will it be hereafter when we see God face to face!—*Thou wilt not suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.* The Scripture says the like of no other man, as it gives over all men to corruption and dust. This is the only One who here proclaims the Gospel in this truly "Golden psalm," that His flesh shall not corrupt or be converted into dust, but that He shall die and lie calm and secure, waiting for the resurrection (Luther).—*Thou hast made known to me the ways of life.* All the ways which Jesus in His humiliation and exaltation has trod, in His passage through suffering to glory, are ways of life for all men; and all the ways by which He leads souls from the beginning of their conversion to their full perfection are ways of life (Apost. Past.).—*Jesus' death and resurrection a twofold mystery.* 1. That He should die who has life in Himself. 2. That He should rise who came to give His life for many.—Living fellowship with God an earnest of eternal life.—How body and soul rejoice in the living God.—The prophetic word a light in a dark place.—*The descent of Jesus into hell, and its import.* 1. An evidence of the perfect humanity of Jesus. 2. The lowest depth of His humiliation. 3. The turning-point to His exaltation. 4. The standard of measurement of the comprehensive extent of the work of redemption (Lechler).

Men and brethren (ver. 29). Peter here calls the assembled Jews brethren, both on account of their carnal descent (Rom. ix. 3), and also because of the good hope that many of them would embrace the Gospel, and thus become truly his brethren; and his heartfelt love for them is seen in his address, as he became more earnest. Ah! how willingly would he have ministered to them altogether, that they might become the children of God (Apost. Past.). —*He is dead and buried.* Death and the grave are the end of all the glory of this world; therefore set not your heart on it (Starke).

This Jesus God has raised (ver. 32). Now the apostle closes the circle, turning back to the beginning of his sermon.— "But ye are witnesses of these things," said the Risen One to

His disciples; and here is seen a complete echo of this word of the Lord from the mouth of the apostle (Besser).—How good and pleasant is it when teachers, who perform the work of the Lord in one congregation, are entirely at one in this chief matter, and can appeal the one to the other! (Apost. Past.).

Being by the right hand of God exalted (ver. 33). What the world exalted on the cross, that God exalted to heaven (Starke). —*Having received, He hath poured forth.* The Son receives for us from the Father, the Holy Ghost receives from the Son and gives to us (John xvi. 14). O blessed giving and receiving! Let us imitate the Holy Trinity: faith receives, love gives.

Sit Thou on My right hand, etc. (ver. 35). This prophetic radical word, which the Lord set before the scribes (Matt. xxii. 43), blossoms gloriously throughout the apostolic writings, and bears sweet fruit (1 Cor. xv. 25; Eph. i. 20; Heb. i. 13, v. 6) (Besser).—*Until I make Thy foes Thy footstool.* Must Christ wait until all His enemies are put under His feet? Why then should we not wait? (Starke).—We need not understand His making His enemies His footstool as meaning only that the Lord will inflict eternal pain and punishment on His impenitent adversaries. It also takes place when He brings them to acknowledge their misery and enmity, to throw down their weapons, and to entreat for favour: this is the victory most precious to Him. Such He lifts up, takes to His heart, yea, at length places on His throne (Apost. Past.).—According to what we see and feel, it by no means everywhere appears that Christ reigns so powerfully among us, but rather we see and feel the very reverse, and there is nothing before our eyes but mere weakness and feebleness among Christians, as if they were altogether poor and forsaken, oppressed by the world and trampled under foot, moreover surprised and afflicted of the devil with sin, with the fears of death and hell, and with anguish; and besides all manner of common bodily disasters, dangers and troubles oppress them, more than others. Therefore a man must have a strong and mighty faith, that he may contend and fight against all such feelings and thoughts, and hold to the naked word which he now hears, that this Christ, albeit invisible, is by God set at His own right hand, and shall and will remain there, and rule mightily over us, although secret and concealed from the world. For this saying, "Sit Thou at My right hand," because God says it,

must be, and remain, true, and no creature can overthrow or falsify it: as He Himself also will not repudiate it, let all things seem, and feel, and pretend to be as they please (Luther).—*Christ's exaltation.* 1. By the right hand of God. 2. To the right hand of God.—*Christ's ascension to the throne.* "As long as Jesus remains the Lord, it always becomes more glorious."—The outpouring of the Spirit a witness of the exaltation of the crucified Redeemer (Lechler).

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (ver. 36). With this weighty conclusion, Peter turns himself once more, first to the understanding of his hearers, to whom he had proved Jesus to be the Messiah from the word of God, as well as from their experience,—from what they now saw and heard; and then to their heart and conscience, into which he at the conclusion inflicts a sharp sting, and reveals to them their sin, as well as the way of salvation, with the words, Ye have crucified Him, but God has made Him both Lord and Christ. —*Jesus Christ as the living One exalted to heaven*, attested, 1. In the Scriptures—the prophets and apostles; 2. in the history of the world—from Pentecost to this day; 3. in the hearts and consciences both of friends and foes.—*This Jesus, whom ye have crucified, God has made Lord and Christ.* 1. A sermon of repentance, full of bitter truth. 2. A sermon of consolation, full of sweet grace.—*Christ at God's right hand.* 1. For the protection of His friends; 2. for the destruction of His enemies.—*Jesus Christ enthroned as the King of glory.* 1. In the Scriptures, where all the prophets and apostles testify of Him. 2. In the world, where He reigns invisible, and rules in the midst of His enemies. 3. In hearts, where He yet manifests Himself as the Prince of peace and the Lord of salvation. 4. In heaven, where friend and foe shall yet behold Him in His glory.

D.

The Effect of the Discourse.

Chap. ii. 37–41.

The discourse, together with the admonitions added to it, resulted in the conversion of three thousand souls, who were added to the disciples of Jesus by baptism.

37 Now, when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said unto Peter, and to the other apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 But Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise concerns you, and your children, and all in the distance, as many as the Lord our God will call. 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this perverse generation. 41 Then they received the word and were baptized: and on that day there were added about three thousand souls.

Ver. 41. The *textus receptus* has ἀσμένως after οὖν. But it is a later addition, which is awanting in the best MSS. and versions, and in the fathers. It is therefore rejected by Lachmann and Tischendorf.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Now, when they heard this—what shall we do?*—The effect of the discourse was penetrating: the hearers, that is, a great portion of them, were "pierced to the heart." The discourse, aided not a little by the sting in the concluding words, pierced them to the heart. The address of the apostle touched, first of all, their feelings: their minds were painfully affected, penetrated with sorrow, because they had mistaken, despised, ill-treated, and brought to the cross Jesus, whom they must now recognise as the Messiah and as their Lord; and thus they had sinned grievously against the Lord and His Anointed, and had incurred the just punishments of God. But the effect did not stop with this sudden emotion, which was produced by the newly acquired knowledge and enlightenment; on the contrary, it was evidenced from the question, "What shall we do?" that their wills also were powerfully affected, so that they applied for advice to the apostles, and showed themselves ready to do what was their duty and the will of God. Whilst with friendly feeling and sincere confidence they asked advice from Peter and the rest of the apostles, as from brethren, they likewise showed, not only a real concern about salvation, but also incipient faith and a confidence in God, who would perhaps forgive them and lead them in the right way.

2. *Repent.*—Peter gives with pleasure the advice requested, and thus performs, so to speak, a special act of the pastoral care in pointing out to the susceptible and awakened the way of salvation. He makes a twofold demand, and gives a twofold promise. He demands, 1. that they change their mind,—their moral disposition (μετανοεῖτε); 2. that they be baptized in the name of

Jesus (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι *I. X.*, that is, on the ground of their faith in Jesus—of their acknowledgment and subjection to Him as Lord and Messiah). The rite of baptism is here supposed as known from John the Baptist and from the works of Jesus. What Peter requires thus amounts to a change of mind and faith; and baptism is accordingly, in the first instance, to be viewed as a moral act of the person baptized, whilst, in virtue of the promise annexed to it, it is also certainly a means of grace on the part of God. Peter promises to those who repent and are baptized, 1. forgiveness of sins, and 2. the gift of the Holy Ghost.—Ver. 40 contains the summary of the additional statements and exhortations of the apostle, as he properly pressed them to an immediate and determinate conclusion, and thus struck the iron while it was hot. The exhortations essentially amount to this, that the awakened, by laying hold of the proffered grace, should rescue themselves, and thus be separated from fellowship in sin and destruction with the perverse generation.

3. *For the promise concerns you.*—Whilst he holds out to them the sure hope of the same gift of the Holy Ghost which the apostles and other disciples had already received, he also confirms it by pointing out those whom this promise concerned; namely, it concerns you, the Israelites; and also your children, that is, it is not limited to the present, but stretches itself to the future, to the posterity of Israel; and it has a yet more comprehensive destination, it concerns πᾶσι τοῖς εἰς μακράν, all nations, that is, the Gentiles, who are afar off, as many of them as God will call. Beza understands this last of a long *post futuri*, but that is already included in τέκνα ὑμῶν. Meyer and Baumgarten think that it refers to the Israelites in distant lands, because the context does not point to the Gentiles. But when the gradation or gradual extension of the circle is considered; besides, that Peter regards his hearers as the representatives of all nations (ver. 36); moreover, that the Jews of the dispersion required no special mention, as they originally partook of the promise as well as those who happened to be present, it is probable that the Gentiles are included. Accordingly, the opinion that the passage refers to the Gentiles, adopted by Brenz, Calvin, Bengel, Lange, and others, is to be preferred. The universality of the salvation is certainly here only treated in outline; the definite and clear perception of it was declared afterwards.

4. *They received the word.*—The final result was astonishing: a crowd of about three thousand received the word with determination of will, were baptized, and added to the Church of Christ. They were in the course of the same day baptized by the twelve apostles. That all who had assembled and had been hearers were converted, is naturally not the meaning; for the mockers (ver. 13) had heard also, and all of them would at least not be changed. It was entirely in accordance with the command of Jesus (Matt. xxviii. 19), that those who were prepared honestly to receive the testimony of Jesus were immediately baptized; further instruction in doctrine (διδάσκοντες) would fitly follow afterwards.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The apostle describes the way of salvation simply, but according to the evangelical truth. He requires of the people, whose participation in the crucifixion of the Redeemer he had so expressly maintained, as the condition of their forgiveness, not fastings, penances, and such like meritorious works; but only repentance and a change of mind on the one hand, and the reception of baptism in the name of Jesus, and thus faith in Him as their Messiah, on the other hand.

2. Baptism, according to this section, is a twofold act—human and divine: a human act, inasmuch as the baptized person by receiving baptism confesses Jesus as his Lord (in other words, confesses the triune God as his God); and inasmuch as the Church which administers baptism to him receives him as a member and unites him to itself. Baptism is a divine act, inasmuch as God separates the man from the perverse and sinful generation (ver. 40, σώθητε supposes a saving power to which the man resigns himself), forgives his sins, and makes him a partaker of the Holy Ghost. Certainly the ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν is here more closely and directly connected with baptism than the gift of the Holy Ghost; for it is marked out by εἰς as the nearest design and the inseparable promise of baptism; whilst of the other it is only said, "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," from which it is not clear that they would immediately receive the Spirit in and with baptism.

3. *The Community or Church of Christ.*—That Pentecost is the birthday of the Church has already been recognised. The

Church is founded by the work of Christ, as Prophet, Priest, and King: in particular, by the calling and induction of the apostles, and by the gathering of a yet wider circle of disciples through the institution of the Lord's Supper and baptism. But before Pentecost the Church of Christ, since its Head was enthroned invisible in heaven, was, like the human body, formed of the dust of the ground, before the spirit from God was breathed into it, so that it became a living soul (Gen. ii. 7). The Church of Christ, as the new collective personality, was formed and set up in the world, but it was not until Pentecost that the Spirit of God was breathed into it, and it became a living soul; and from that time the Church of Christ has been able to increase by the assimilation and incorporation of other souls. Irenæus says: Ubi ecclesia, ibi et spiritus Dei: et ubi spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia et omnis gratia. The second part of this twofold proposition is fully established by our chapter: the first is not in its universality, inasmuch as in chap. i. and beginning of chap. ii. the Church of Christ existed, although the Spirit of God was not yet there. And this fact, which cannot be contested, also shows that in other times the Church of Christ may likewise come to such a condition that one must seek there with difficulty for the Spirit of God.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Now, when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart (ver. 37). So to temper the law and the Gospel, that the word may as a sharp dart pierce to the heart, is something so weighty that mere human reason and strength cannot effect it (Apost. Past.). —As faith, so also repentance arises from the hearing of the word.—True repentance for sin is powerfully awakened by the representation of the sufferings of Christ, as we caused them by our sins (Starke).—"Him have ye crucified:" this conclusion of Peter's sermon was the sharp hook by which he, as a true fisher of men, caught their hearts: it was the goad by which the exalted Christ Himself, the good Shepherd, smote their souls, so that it was hard for them to kick against it: it was the two-edged sword of the Spirit which pierced and separated soul and spirit, joints and marrow, a judge of the thoughts and intents of their hearts.

Men and brethren, what shall we do? Love awakens love.

Peter's tender address, "Men and brethren," now awakens a response in the hearts of his hearers.—*What shall we do?* namely, in order to make amends for our sins, to avert the wrath of God, and to obtain the salvation which you have proclaimed. Blessed inquiry of a penitent heart longing for grace.

Peter said to them, Repent. The fishermen, when they observe that fish are in their net, double their diligence in drawing. How sad, on the other hand, is it for a fisher of men who, from want of experience, knows not how to counsel those who are awakened by his preaching, but leaves them, or frightens them again out of the net! (Apost. Past.).—If we will rightly unfold the word of God, we ourselves must have experienced it. Peter had after his fall learned repentance and tasted the forgiveness of sins (The same).—Like the Baptist and Christ Himself, the Church begins its work of salvation with the call, Repent! For the beginning of all Christianity is repentance (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*And ye shall receive.* If a teacher has to do with souls with whom the word of God takes effect and produces eager desire, he may spread his sails the more widely, and open his mouth the more joyfully and confidently. He can promise to such souls very great blessings, and need not be afraid that God will leave unfulfilled, what he has promised in His name, to them who comply with His way of salvation (The same).—Without true change of heart and mind there is no true repentance.—Baptism is a powerful means of regeneration and forgiveness of sins, Tit. iii. 5.—Well spent fast-days give a blessed Pentecost.—We have not the Holy Ghost of ourselves, but must receive it from God as a gift.—Thou, Christian, art baptized. But baptism ought to continue to work in thee. Every day ought to be to thy soul as thy baptismal day. Every morning thou shouldest anew bury thyself in thy Lord Jesus Christ (Ahlfeld).—What shall we do? had the men of Israel asked: now they hear that they should quietly permit that to take place in them which the Holy Ghost does.—What would they not have given had Jesus of Nazareth stepped into the midst of them, that they might embrace the knees of this Crucified One, and be comforted by Him with the consolation, Your sins are forgiven you! Now behold their desires were to be satisfied. To the water of baptism the triune God has annexed His gracious presence (Besser).—Therefore shall

this doctrine always remain firm and sure, that the Holy Ghost is given by the ministry of the Church, that is, by the preaching of the Gospel and baptism. There all must seek Him who wish to have Him, and must not despise the little company among whom the Gospel is preached, but unite themselves to it, assembled in the name of Christ with one accord, and assist by prayer (Luther).—*We are saved, not properly by what we do, as by what the triune God does in us.* 1. We must repent; yet this is an operation of the preventing grace of God by which He draws us to His Son. 2. We are brought by baptism into the most intimate fellowship with Christ the Saviour. 3. It is through the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost that we are preserved in a living state in this fellowship by the word and sacrament (Langbein).

For this promise concerns you and your children (ver. 39). The divine promises have a great extension: this encourages us to urge them upon every man (Apost. Past.).—*And your children.* The Jews hitherto had such a church of God, and were such a people of God, that not only the grown-up were God's people, but also little children, with whom God made a covenant that He should be their God. If, then, Peter on the day of Pentecost had said to the Jews, Men and brethren, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; but your little children are not to be baptized, but are to remain in their sins, condemned and reckoned among the devil's people until they grow up and attain to reason; what would the devout Jews have answered? (Bugenhagen).—*And them that are afar off.* However far a heart may be from God, God's voice will yet be heard by it (Starke).—It is ever God's earnest desire to invite, as yet there is room for all who come, Luke xiv. 21 (Lindheim).

And with many other words did he testify and exhort (ver. 40). Testifying and exhorting go together. The exhortations must be founded on the word and testimony of God; and the divine testimony must be carried home to the heart by exhortations (Apost. Past.).—*Save yourselves.* Nothing right results from the motions of the Holy Ghost, if souls remain entangled in the snares of tempting company. Christians ought to shine as lights in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation, but the sinful connection with the world must cease (Apost. Past.).—

Every conversion to God requires a separation from the creature. Corrupt society must be avoided: better alone than with a wicked community (Quesnel).

They received the word (ver. 41). The commencement of true conversion is the willing reception of the word of truth (Starke). — Blessedness or condemnation may result from a single received or despised sermon and instruction.— *Were baptized.* By this wholesome deluge were they rescued from the perverse generation given over to destruction, and added to the assembly in the true ark of safety, 1 Pet. iii. 20 (Besser).— *And there were added that day about three thousand souls.* That was a great draught of fishes which Peter made (Apost. Past.). —Had the apostles narrowed holy baptism, this true gate of the kingdom of heaven, by a baptismal examination, as erring spirits do who degrade the sacrament of baptism as if it were a certificate for full-grown believers, then would these three thousand never have been added on the same day (Besser).

On the whole section (vers. 37–41).—*The Christian way of salvation.* It is a life, 1. in repentance toward God, our Father in Christ; 2. in faith in the Son of God, our Redeemer; 3. in the power of the Holy Ghost.—*The gracious work of the triune God.* 1. The Father planned the counsel of redemption in eternal love. 2. The Son executed the work in voluntary obedience. 3. The Holy Ghost, by the word and sacrament, applies the salvation to us in repentance and faith (Leonh. and Spieg.). —*Repentance unto life.* 1. Repentance causes first bitter grief (sorrow); 2. yet it ends in salvation (forgiveness of sins); 3. and our heart, anew strengthened by the word of peace, serves the Lord henceforth (The same).—The effect of the apostolic discourse, a witness of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the apostles.— *What ought to be the effect of a real evangelical sermon.* 1. Emotion of heart. 2. Determination of will. Only no such emotion by which a man is not moved from his position. —The life-question, What shall I do?—The great difference between the answer of the Baptist and of the apostles to the same question, What shall we do? Luke iii. 10. There the law, here the Gospel.—The evangelical way of salvation in calling, enlightening, converting, justifying, and renewing.—The word and sacrament indispensable means of grace.—Repentance and the forgiveness of sins both in the name of Jesus Christ.—

The gift of the Holy Ghost a universal promise.—The kingdom of God, with its promises and blessings, is under the law of increase.—*The opposite effects of conversion.* 1. Its separating effect (ver. 40). 2. Its uniting effect (ver. 41), (Lechler).—The first pentecostal sermon as a sermon of the Spirit for all the world. The Spirit's office, 1. of teaching; 2. of correction; and 3. of comfort (Beck).—*Who receives the Holy Ghost?* 1. All ought and may; 2. but He is poured out only on the penitent and believing (Kapff).—The first sermon and the first baptism (Palmer).—*It is still the Church of Christ!* 1. Whence does she receive? From Christ and the Holy Ghost. 2. What has she? Fellowship, the word, the sacrament. 3. To whom does she give? To the penitent and believing (Beck).—The outpouring of the Holy Ghost as a work and glorification of the Saviour Jesus Christ.—*The gift of the Holy Ghost.* 1. How desire after it is awakened in the heart. 2. In what state our heart must be to receive it. 3. What effect it produces in us (Gerlach).—*The building of the holy pentecostal temple in the world and in the Church.* (The Old Testament counterpart, the building of the tower of Babel; the Old Testament type, the temple of Solomon). 1. Preparation for the building. 2. The builder. 3. The building stones. 4. The plan of building. 5. The completion of the building (Schmidt).—*What must I do to receive the Holy Ghost?* 1. Look in faith to the Son of God: He distributes Him from His heavenly throne. 2. Full of sorrow, beat upon thy breast and see that thou repentest. 3. Associate thyself with the people of God, and separate thyself from the multitude.

On the whole history of Pentecost.—How the same thing that happened at Pentecost happens even now, in order to preserve and extend the Christian Church. 1. Praise of the mighty works of God in different tongues. 2. The word pierces to the heart. 3. Believers continue with one accord in the apostles' doctrine, in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Schleiermacher).—*How does the Holy Spirit work in our days for the preservation and extension of the Church?* 1. By the discourse on the mighty acts of God. 2. By powerful awakening in men's minds. 3. By the use of the appointed means of grace (Schütztz).—*It is the Spirit whose creative power creates man a second time.* 1. He breathes into him a new breath of life. 2. He opens his mouth to the praise of God. 3. He leads him to loving companions.—O Holy

Ghost, tarry with us as a Spirit, 1. of thorough repentance, 2. of joyful faith, and 3. of brotherly love.—*Pentecost a spiritual spring feast.* 1. The spring breezes which blow: stormy blasts and soft zephyrs. 2. The spring voices which are heard: the inspired tongues of the apostles praising the mighty acts of God, and the timid voices of awakened consciences inquiring after salvation. 3. The spring blossoms which appear: child-like faith and brotherly love.—*The marvellous draught of Peter, the fisher of men.* ("Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men," Luke v.) 1. The deep sea into which he launched out (Launch out into the deep): at his feet the roaring multitude of the people of Israel, and before his eyes the vast sea of humanity. 2. The good net which he cast out (Cast out your net on the right side): the sermon concerning Jesus Christ, the crucified and the risen One, proclaimed with reproving earnestness and ardent love to souls. 3. The great draught which he made (and they enclosed a great multitude of fishes): about three thousand in one day; and now here, among you, hardly one or two.

E.

The Holy, Godly, and Blessed Condition of the Primitive Church.

Chap. II. 42–47.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' instruction and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all believers were together, and held all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, as every one had need. 46 And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and, breaking bread at home, did take their meals with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added daily to the Church those who were saved.

Ver. 47. Mill, Bengel, and Lachmann have left out τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ because awanting in many MSS. and versions; but it appears here to have been omitted according to analogy of ver. 41, whilst there, on account of the passive, the case is different from here.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *And they continued stedfastly.*—Ver. 42, according to the context, refers, primarily, only to the newly converted (ver.

41), and it is not until ver. 44 that the view is expanded to the whole of believers (*πάντες δὲ οἱ πιστεύοντες*). It is the general opinion of interpreters that the whole Church is here spoken of (Meyer alone thinks that this requires to be proved); that it follows from *προσετέθησαν* (ver. 41) that the whole body of believers is the subject. But nothing follows from that: according to the context, only the three thousand who were added (to the original number of the Church) are spoken of: ver. 44 is decisive on this point. It gives also an excellent meaning if we limit this verse to the newly converted. They were made disciples when they had been baptized to Christ: detailed instruction, and gradual increase in knowledge and holiness, must now follow. And this took place according to our verse. They themselves felt how necessary it was for them to be yet more deeply grounded in the truth, and in fellowship with God in Christ; and therefore they continued stedfastly in the instruction of the apostles, in brotherly fellowship with believers (*κοινωνία* denotes this, and neither the communion—*καὶ τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου* being regarded as explanatory,—nor exclusively liberality), in holy meals (Agapæ) which closed with the Lord's Supper, and lastly in prayer. Whilst in ver. 41 the aorists *ἐβαπτίσθησαν* and *προσετέθησαν* denote a single transient act, *ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες* cause us to understand the continuance and steadiness of the actions mentioned.

2. *There came a fear upon all.*—Luke here relates the impression which the event, especially the decided conversion of so many persons, made upon the multitude of the unconverted: a holy dread came upon them whilst they involuntarily recognised the finger of God, and felt His power, perhaps for a moment received a presentiment of the coming wrath upon the obstinate enemies of God. Whilst the historian relates this, he adds at the same time a fact which contributed to this foreboding impression of the pentecostal event, namely, the performance of many miracles by the apostles, naturally in the course of a period of time.

3. *But all believers,* vers. 44–47, embrace the whole youthful Christian Church, and describe its fellowship, condition, and practice. First, the feature of their brotherly love and unity is placed in the foreground. "They were together," that is (as in chap. i. 15, ii. 1), in one and the same place, partly in the temple

and partly in houses, which was the more practicable, if a considerable portion of the newly converted were pilgrims to the feast, who would immediately return home. Further, the brotherly unity of Christians showed itself in the management of their temporal possessions. But what is meant by this? Is it a community of goods in the strict sense of the term, as a regulation universal, without exception, and at the same time enforced by law? The decision on this point will follow afterwards, from chap. iv. 34. Our passage, taken by itself, would not suggest the idea of a rule of law to which individuals must submit, but rather of a general custom. Not the first, because only the actions of individuals are represented as matters of fact, and there is no trace of anything else than of a free determination. On the other hand, the expressions seem so unrestricted and universal (*πάντες οἱ πιστεύοντες—εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινά· καὶ τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις ἐπίπρασκον*), that if the matter were only mentioned in this passage, we would suppose an almost universal custom of community of goods. Further, *εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινά* is not so much as "they possessed all things in common" (Meyer), but "they held all things for common"—they did not regard their possessions as if each had it for himself, but as if he had it rather for others: for the disposal of their goods (*κτήματα*, real property; and *ὑπάρξεις*, moveables) does not accord so well with the first meaning as with the latter.

4. *And they continued daily with one accord in the temple.*— Partly in the temple and partly going from house to house. The first Christians still continued faithful to the temple as the centre of Jewish worship and the common national sanctuary; for they did not think of sectarianism and separation, or even of a religious community essentially different and distinct from that of the Old Testament. On the contrary, they engaged, as zealously and as earnestly as ever, in the temple worship at the stated hours of prayer and offering: and this contributed to the favour (ver. 47) in which they stood with the whole people. But they also regularly assembled in a private house (*κατ' οἶκον*), in a narrow and exclusive circle, in confiding fellowship with one another; and it is precisely from such meetings in houses that the peculiar Christian worship has developed itself. Yet here only *κλᾶν ἄρτον* is specially mentioned, by which it is evident from the context that some religious service is meant

(see ver. 42). In ver. 46 Luke certainly represents the manner in which believers partook of their food,—with gladness, refined and sanctified by purity of heart and thanks to God: whereby even their bodily and daily life seems elevated by the Spirit and devotion. But, on the other hand, in κλᾶν ἄρτον a devotional and sacred element enters into the natural and bodily; for the breaking of bread, according to the example and institution of the Lord, a meal with the brethren and the Lord, is also eating and drinking. Thus bodily life and spiritual life, each proceeding from its own side, pass into one another; and in this the internal condition of the primitive Church is manifested, as at once elevated and truly healthy.

5. *The Lord added daily.*—This last sentence of the chapter indicates that the external increase of the Church did not cease with Pentecost, but rather proceeded from it, although in a less degree, yet steadily. But this increase is not to be considered as a natural process, but as the effect of grace, as the act of the living and exalted Lord of the Church (ὁ κύριος προσετίθει).

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Instruction was the first thing by which the newly converted were more deeply grounded in the faith. The Christian Church, in its first features, is the fellowship of faith, and therefore necessarily requires instruction, the knowledge of the truth, the ministry of the word. Religious progress, without instruction and doctrine as its foundation, is neither in conformity with the example and command of Jesus, nor with the practice and principles of the apostles, and is consequently unevangelical.

2. We already find, at the very first commencement of the Church of Christ, all the means of grace used and honoured in their significance as means of salvation: the *word*, partly in the missionary address, and partly in the fundamental elementary teaching and instruction of the apostles; and the *sacraments*—(*a*) baptism, as a means of regeneration in order to become a disciple of Jesus; and (*b*) the Lord's Supper, as the sacrament of growth in order to remain a disciple of Jesus.

3. Prayer as a means of virtue. As the newly converted in the apostolic Church had been called into the Christian life,

and grew in blessings by continuance in prayer, so prayer is, and continues under all circumstances to be, a chief means of growth in sanctification. The fellowship with the living God in Christ Jesus, nourished by prayer, as the intercourse of person with person, cannot do otherwise than elevate, sanctify, and enrich the soul; for God hears prayer, as certainly as He is the living One.

4. The fellowship of believers with one another is, next to intercourse with God, a means of spiritual growth. "Whosoever loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John v. 1). Conversion expands the heart, and produces a holy and blessed communion of souls with one another. It is precisely living faith and love to the Redeemer which transform the mutual relation between men who come into contact into the most cordial and devoted relation. And the active ministering and self-sacrificing love of our neighbour is a proof of faith, and assists its growth.

5. The external increase of the Church was a consequence of its internal growth. The mightier and purer the internal life, the more powerfully does it extend itself without. And the most successful mission is that which takes place spontaneously by the divine life of the whole community, and not by the exertions of single agents. But yet the increase from without is chiefly a work of the Lord, and a proof of His divinity; for it arises not from man who planteth and watereth, but from God who gives the increase and success (1 Cor. iii. 6). This adding to the Church is one of the operations of the exalted Redeemer in His Church.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

They continued stedfastly (ver. 42). It is not enough to begin well; we must persevere in well-doing to the end (Starke).—A sweet calm, as the delightful after-breezes of the pentecostal Spirit, follows the sound from heaven and the quaking of souls (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*In the apostles' instruction.* According to the admonition of the apostle (1 Pet. ii. 2, 3), "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."—The simple and pure Gospel of Christ, the Crucified and the Risen One, which is the essence of all apostolic doctrine, is the

immoveable foundation, on which "all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. ii. 21), (Leonh. and Spieg.).—None of the apostles had his own peculiar doctrines, but they remained together in the simple Gospel, by which believing souls were supported with the one thing needful (Apost. Past.).—*Grow in grace.* 1. He who does not grow declines. 2. Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance. 3. Let him who standeth take heed lest he fall (Lechler.)—*And in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* There ought before all things to be true fellowship with Christ; then will also the fellowship of believers with each other become the purer and the more cordial. And for this purpose the servants of God recommend to souls the use of the Lord's Supper, and stir them up to fellowship in prayer (Apost. Past.).—Keep to the means of grace, and they will keep thee.—*The Lord's Supper.* 1. According to its nature, a meal of the Lord and a brotherly meal. 2. According to its effect, a means of the forgiveness of sins and advancement in godliness.—"Continue in prayer."—Be diligent to retain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

And fear came upon every soul (ver. 43). God can easily strike His enemies to the heart, and put a bit in their mouth (Quesnel).—It is a proof of the works of God, that they awaken among all reverence and fear (Starke).—God is as a wall of fire around His Pentecost Church, in order that its tender plants suffer no injury.—*And many signs and wonders were done by the apostles.* The numerous wonders and signs which were done by the apostles might indeed excite fear among those who were without; but it was not by them, strictly speaking, that faith was caused, but by the word of the Gospel (Apost. Past.).

And they held all things common (ver. 44). Not the envy of those who had nothing, but the love of those who had, gave rise to this community of goods among the first Christians, which has nothing in common with the fanatical equality of communism. In the sight of God, property is not theft, but selfishness is which withdraws property from the need of a brother. If necessity required it, everything which a member of the holy Christian family possessed was at the disposal of its Head; but the Holy Ghost did not inculcate a sale of goods in order to possess none. The primitive Church has nothing in

common with the cloister. Besides, there is no mention in our text of a legal enactment: love accommodated itself (Besser).—That Christian communism said, What is mine, is thine: modern, unchristian communism says, What is thine, is mine. Among those Christians it is said, Take what I have: modern communists say, Give what thou hast. That holy community of goods was founded on a spirit of love to the poor: this now preached rests on a spirit of hatred to the rich.—The uniting power of faith: it unites men to God and to one another.—Love, as the fruit of faith, shows itself in action.—Where faith and love are of the right kind, we will not be weary in well-doing (Starke).—There exists no stronger friendship than that among believers.—Unity and love show best that the Church is God's building and work.—Earthly possessions are insignificant to those who possess the heavenly.—The more love to the Lord, the more love to our neighbour.—To do good, and to communicate, forget not.—Do unto others as thou wouldst wish others to do unto thee.—Whoso pitieth the poor lendeth to the Lord.—*Christian communion distinguished from unchristian.* 1. Its source not an external law or bare power, but the free impulse of love. 2. Its object not general equality, but general welfare. 3. The way to effect this object not a community of goods, but a community of hearts.

And they continued daily with one accord in the temple (ver. 45). The Lord had not yet destroyed the temple of Jerusalem; therefore Christians repaired to it as the place of public prayer and worship.—Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.—*And broke bread from house to house.* They celebrated their own institution, the sacrament of the New Covenant, naturally in the narrow circle of the Church. By this means their houses were consecrated as the temples of the Most High; and the house and the church, quiet prayer in the closet and the loud praise of God in the temple, were harmoniously blended together.—An earnest exhortation to raise again the broken-down family altars, and to call into life the dead family worship (Leonh. and Spieg.).—Simplicity and concord are the two chief virtues and ornaments of the true Christian (Starke).

They did eat their food, praising God (ver. 47). The fruit of faith is, that it makes the conscience quiet, peaceful, and glad

(Starke).—God does not allow Himself to be outdone in liberality: the more we praise and thank Him, the more He gives us grace and consolation (Quesnel).—No one can be more satisfied with the enjoyment of God's bodily mercies than a child of God, who in enjoying them rejoices in God, and thus tastes and sees that God is good.—Whenever a man is converted to Christ, his blessedness commences (Apost. Past.).—Godliness helps to the purest enjoyment of life.—The true Christian does not hang his head.—God keeps His promise: Him that honoureth Me, I will honour.—Happier men than the disciples of Jesus there were not in all Jerusalem.—*And the Lord added daily to the Church.* There is nothing more powerful for the conversion of unbelievers than the unity and joyfulness of Christians (Starke).—And what was it by means of which the primitive Church conquered hearts? Tract societies did not yet exist in her, nor has she done it with much running and speaking. She herself was a living treatise of the power of the Gospel unto salvation. Her form did the work of a missionary. Her nets and hooks consisted in the profusion of her divine life. Whoever came near to her, the impression overcame him: This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven (Krummacher).

On the whole section.—On the saving power of true apostolic Christianity. To this belongs, 1. continuing stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine; 2. manifesting itself in acts of self-denying love; 3. winning souls by the joyful praises of God out of singleness of heart (Harless).—*The pentecostal Church, the commencement of a new period of the kingdom of God.* 1. The manner of its founding is new. 2. The form of the internal and external life of its members is new. 3. Its spiritual influence on those without is new (Krummacher).—*One heart and one soul.* 1. Thus it becomes the Church of Him who before His sacrifice made it the most earnest desire of His heart, that all might be one. 2. Thus, as Christians, we should and might become, if we gave ourselves up entirely to Christ in faith. 3. We are no energetic citizens of the kingdom of God, if without guile we do not strive after such a blessed unity (Knapp).—*Without love, no Holy Ghost.* 1. Love in heaven sends Him. 2. Love on earth receives Him. 3. Love in the heart manifests Him (Florey).—*The gracious operations of the Holy Ghost in the life of the first Christian Church.* 1. The faith which it testified. 2. The deeds

which it performed. 3. The love which it evidenced. 4. The means of grace which it employed. 5. The blessedness which it enjoyed (The same).—*The first Christian Church, an abiding pattern for every other:* 1. In the fellowship of faith; 2. in the exercise of love; 3. in the enjoyment of general esteem (Binder).—*The edifying example of the primitive Church.* They remained stedfast, 1. in the apostles' doctrine; 2. in fellowship; 3. in the breaking of bread; 4. in prayer (Langbein).—*How does the glory of the new life which meets us in the young Church at Jerusalem manifest itself?* 1. As a fresh and healthy spiritual life. 2. As a holy family life. 3. As a winning witness life (Hofacker).—*The chief features of a true Christian congregational life.* 1. Faithful stedfastness in the confession of the truth. 2. Fellowship of public and family worship. 3. Manifestation of faith in works of self-denying love (Langbein).—*Church-visitation sermon.* Four rules according to which a congregation and its minister have to examine themselves: 1. Use of the divine word. 2. Enjoyment of the Lord's Supper. 3. Participation in Christian fellowship. 4. The practice of prayer (Weitbrecht).—There are three paradises to which we may look back: the paradise of the first man—of our childhood—of the primitive Church. —*How the retrospect of the paradisaical condition of the primitive Church may be profitable to us.* 1. To the cordial strengthening of faith, when we see that church standing forth, as the elect of God. 2. To wholesome humiliation, when we see its glory veiled soon afterwards, and almost everywhere. 3. To edifying knowledge, that the gracious power granted to the Church, as the institution for saving souls, is not yet lost. 4. To comfortable assurance, that through all the travail of the present and the future, there will at length be born unto the Lord a crowd of children as the dew of the morning (Schmidt).—Behold here the tabernacle of God with men! 1. They are His people (vers. 42, 44–47). 2. He is their God (vers. 44, 47).—*The little flock of the good Shepherd.* How lovingly they hold together, 1. with the Lord, 2. among themselves, 3. in relation to the world.—*The first Christian Church a holy family.* 1. The kind Father of the family, recognised in filial love and proved in daily blessings. 2. The loving members of the family: the old ones of Pentecost, and the new who are added to it. 3. The beautiful order of the family: doctrine and prayer, breaking of bread, and

care for the poor. 4. The holy peace of the family: within among themselves, without in relation to the world.—*The blooming garden of God of the primitive Church.* 1. The delightful sunshine of divine grace which it enjoys after the gracious pentecostal rain. 2. The lovely spiritual blossoms and fruits of righteousness which increase under such a divine blessing: faith, love, hope, humility, meekness, purity, alms, prayer, etc. 3. The strong wall by which God's garden is protected from the wasting of the enemy.—*The image of the pentecostal Church at Jerusalem, a golden mirror for all churches.* 1. A mirror of doctrine, to teach us what belongs to a true church. 2. A mirror of penitence, to show us what is wanting in us to become a true church. 3. A mirror of comfort, to point out to us how we may again become a true church.—*Remember from whence thou art fallen, and do the first works!* A hortatory call of the apostolic Church in our days: the first works. 1. Fervent godliness; 2. thorough self-denial; 3. ardent brotherly love; 4. victorious overcoming the world.—*The Jerusalem of the first Christians, the true Sion of God.* 1. The unveiled prototype of the Old Testament city of David. 2. The abiding model of the New Testament Christian Church. 3. The earthly image of the heavenly Jerusalem.

PART SECOND.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JERUSALEM IN ITS DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNMENT, WITH ITS FIGHTS AND VICTORIES, ITS DEEDS AND SUFFERINGS. (CHAP. III.–VII.)

SECTION I.

THE CURE OF THE LAME MAN, AN APOSTOLIC MIRACLE IN THE POWER OF JESUS CHRIST, WITH ITS RESULTS: On the one hand, the testimony of Peter to the people concerning Jesus Christ; and, on the other hand, the arrest of Peter and John, who, after a powerful defence before the council, are set at liberty. All this serves to the strengthening of the faith and the increase of the Church. The public spirit and brotherly love of believers. (Chap. iii. and iv.)

A.

The Miraculous Cure of the Lame Man.

CHAP. III. 1–10.

1 Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. 2 And a man, lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they placed daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them who entered into the temple; 3 Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. 4 But Peter, fastening his eyes on him with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he looked on them attentively, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have that give I to thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up. And immediately his feet and ankle-bones became strong, 8 And he, leaping up, could stand and walk; and he went with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking, and praising God. 10 And they knew that it was he who used to sit for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

Ver. 3. Λαβεῖν after ἐλεημοσύνην is indeed awanting in some MSS. and versions, but it is probably genuine, as with Greek writers it often stands as a pleonasm with αἰτεῖν.

Ver. 6. Ἔγειραι καὶ is awanting in a few MSS. and certainly in the Cod. Sinait.; but it was probably left out because (ver. 7) Peter himself raised up the lame man. There is no sufficient reason to regard it as spurious.

Ver. 7. Many MSS., versions, and fathers have αὐτόν after ἤγειρε, but it is notwithstanding a later addition. Lachmann retains it.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. The further continuance of the history is not related in an unbroken order: all exact determination of time is awanting. Thus we cannot affirm how soon or how long after Pentecost this event occurred. At any rate, a considerable space of time probably intervened.—The history of the cure of the lame man has its point in this, that it contains an act of an apostle in the power of Jesus (πράξεις τῶν ἀποστόλων), along with a powerful testimony of the apostles concerning Jesus as the Saviour before the people and the chief council. What is then related of the internal and external condition of the Church is very suitably added.

2. *Peter and John went together.*—We see the unity of believers in the intimate connection of these two apostles. What chap. ii. 44 said of all, is confirmed of these two. The circumstance reminds us, that the Lord sent forth His disciples two by two.—As at Pentecost all the disciples stood up, but Peter alone discoursed; so here, the two disciples go together, but Peter only speaks and acts. John stands at his side in silence and meditation. His hour is yet to come.

3. *Into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.*—What in chap. ii. 46 was said of the whole Church in general, that they continued daily in the temple, is here seen in a stated instance. The two apostles repair from the city to the temple at the hour of prayer. Formerly, Daniel prayed three times a-day on his knees (Dan. vi. 10); and in the time of the apostles, there were three stated hours of prayer—in the morning at the third hour, at noon at the sixth hour, and in the evening at the ninth hour: the first and last corresponding to the morning and evening sacrifices. At this time it was the evening prayer, about three in the afternoon according to our

reckoning. Both the place and the time of the Old Testament worship were sacred to the disciples of Jesus, and to these they conformed themselves with all fidelity.

4. *At the gate of the temple called Beautiful.*—This name is not elsewhere mentioned, although Josephus describes the gate of Nicanor, of Corinthian brass, as excelling all the others in splendour and value; for which reason it is usually supposed to be the one here referred to. Others suppose the gate Susan, and others yet a third gate.

5. *Lame from his mother's womb.*—So much the greater was the miracle performed on him. And because he used to sit daily at the gate of the temple, his lame condition was thus universally known.

6. *And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him.*—Peter also compassionated the pitiable and needy condition of the cripple, and together with John looked into his face with deep love and pity for Christ's sake. His address, "Look on us," was to awaken in the poor man a collectedness of mind, and a hopeful and confiding attention to the apostles: and it had that effect; for he ἐπεῖχεν αὐτοῖς, that is to say, oculis et animo defixus atque intentus erat in apostolos (Stiegel). He confidently expected to receive something from these men. The earnestness of countenance on both sides effected and evidenced an earnestness of spirit and mind. This was a preparation on both sides for what happened.

7. *Silver and gold have I none.*—Though the lame man looked up to them with special trust, yet he expected money. Peter takes from him this hope, but he does not therefore suffer him to depart empty: by speaking the powerful word of command and help, he gives him what he has—strength of life from Jesus Christ. Peter speaks and works not in his own authority, but in the strength of Jesus; and in the strength and grace of Jesus was the lame man, on his part, to rise up and walk. Word and deed coincided: the taking of the hand and the lifting up were part of the transaction. And in the same moment, by God's almighty power, as if an electric shock passed through him, the lame limbs were strengthened: the man leaps up, and can stand and walk, which he had never before done in his life.

8. *And he went with them into the temple.*—He repairs not immediately to his own house, but to the sanctuary of God, to

give thanks and praise as a proof that he recognised the blessing and power of God in Christ, and received it with thanksgiving. And as he entered the court, and as his heart leaps within him, so he leaps and walks—body and soul rejoice together in the living God, for this new living strength bestowed upon him. All those present at prayer in the spaces of the court became eye-witnesses of the miracle performed on him; for they saw him walking, and they knew him to be the same man who sat helpless and begging at the gate of the temple. The fact produced upon them an impression of the deepest astonishment.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The miracle took place in the name of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. All the miracles of the apostles and disciples of Jesus have their source in Him: they serve for His honour, and not for the honour of a man, although he be a disciple of the Lord. Luke (Acts ii. 43) has very carefully expressed himself: *διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων* were many miracles done; for it was not they, but the Lord, who did them—they were only His instruments. Such miracles were the deeds and operations of the exalted Lord, and served as living proofs and tokens that He, the Crucified, lives in glory and power, and that He is with His own in true fellowship, and acknowledges them when they acknowledge Him.

2. It is seldom that the co-operation of both parties—the doer and the receiver—is so clearly seen as in this miracle, resulting from the power of Christ. First, in the looks of both parties: Peter looking on the lame man with sympathizing love, ready to heal and to help him; and the lame man, at the order of the apostle, regarding him and John stedfastly with a petitioning and hopeful spirit. Secondly, in the believing apprehension of Jesus by both parties: Peter speaking and commanding in the name of Jesus; and the lame man, also hopeful and susceptible, with his whole soul attaching himself to Jesus. Lastly, in the spiritual and bodily exertions of both parties: Peter stretching forth and taking the man by the right hand; and the man, with miraculous strength of will and muscles, lifting himself up. The name of Jesus, the person of Jesus, His grace and divine saving power, is the centre: in Him the souls meet, the men reach forth their hands, and find spiritual and bodily strength, in

giving and receiving. The more closely they press to Him with faith, love, and confiding trust, the more unhindered and the more fully do they receive strength, help, and salvation.

3. Moreover, that not only corporeal strength and the sound use of his limbs were bestowed on the lame man, but also that his soul was quickened and gained over for Jesus Christ, may be inferred, not only from the overflowing gratitude which expressed itself aloud in praises to God, but also from the entire character of the miracle, as conditioned by a spiritual and bodily union with Jesus Christ both of the giver and receiver. Such a union of the needy and hoping lame man with Jesus cannot psychologically be thought of as ceasing in an instant, especially as grateful thanks and praise to God have the promise of future salvation (Ps. l. 23).

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Now Peter and John went up together (ver. 1). According to their natural dispositions, Peter and John did not very exactly correspond with each other. But diamond polishes diamond: these two precious stones may have advantageously polished each other (Rieger).—Why might not the worshippers of the Saviour, who had already come, experience joy in the temple service, which was a shadow of things to come? (Besser).—Fellowship with all believers is perfectly compatible with an ardent affection between a few.—*How a Christian has to regard the ordinances and regulations of public worship.* 1. Not as a legal yoke; 2. not as a meritorious work; but, 3. as a good and useful discipline; 4. as a thankworthy opportunity for increase in goodness (Lechler).—*The church-going* of the Christian, a free and delightful service: 1. for the honour of God; 2. for the edification of his neighbour; 3. for his own salvation.

A man lame from his mother's womb (vers. 2, 3). The wretched and the poor are in general the fittest persons to whom the Saviour can manifest His transcendent grace and power (Apost. Past.).—The lame man did not beg in vain at the gate of the temple: the law and the prophets knocked more strongly there at the heart: heart and hand were more ready to give (Leonh. and Spieg.).—This lame man is a type of our natural inability. We must be carried so long as our feet are weak. Whoever lays us before the beautiful gate of the temple, that is to say,

Jesus Christ, has brought us to the gate of divine life and strength, where we will certainly be healed (Gossner).—How bitter are the fruits of sin! From it proceed all defects, even those of the body (Lind.).—The servants of Christ willingly associate, as their Master did, with the poor, and bear their poverty. An upright teacher is not satisfied until he causes those who need his help and office, though only in their temporal affairs, to experience the divine power of Jesus in their spiritual necessities (Apost. Pastor).

But Peter fastening his eyes upon him (ver. 4). Certainly full of love. Would that we always thus regarded those who ask our help, instead of looking at them carelessly, or quickly turning our eyes away! Our heart must open to them: the closer look at their misery, the look into such a sorrowful countenance, into such a disordered household, or into such a disordered mind, must move us; yea, also the gleam of benignity which often beams from such a starved countenance, the spark of the divine image which yet glimmers in such a savage breast, must fill us with joyful wonder, and with new faith, new hope, new love.—*Look on us:* with trust, with confidence. It is a tender and paternal address, when faithful teachers thus call to the poor and the blind in the faith: Look on us; we are ambassadors in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God (Apost. Past.).

And he looked on them attentively, expecting to receive something of them (ver. 5). How attentively and willingly will men hearken to us, if they hope to obtain temporal aid! (Quesnel). —It is a great blessing if a teacher, by the power of the Spirit, brings his hearers to expect to receive something. They are then no more dead, but have a susceptible and craving heart. But they must not expect in vain. How often do awakened and hungry souls look on their teachers, expecting to receive something, and yet remain empty! (Apost. Past.).

Silver and gold have I none (ver. 6). This is apostolical: as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. Peter, poor in gold, was yet richer than all the rich—than all those covered with gold and in lucrative offices. He had faith in the power of the name of Jesus Christ, and with that he effected more than if Christ had appointed him to the income of a kingdom or of an ecclesiastical

state (Gossner.)—Where everything shines and sparkles with silver and gold, that cannot be the true patrimony of Peter or the true apostolic see (Lindheim).—*But what I have, that give I to thee.* This is the disposition of good and faithful servants. He who had received two pounds could not certainly increase it so much as he that had received five; but yet he could say, What Thou hast given me, that I have faithfully improved (Apost. Past.).—*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.* Thus, in this lame man, the despised and crucified Jesus of Nazareth is glorified as the Saviour both of soul and body.—Health is better than silver and gold; but health of soul is better than health of body.—When God appears to refuse us something, He gives us something better.—If God would not give us anything better for the salvation of our souls than what we generally ask, we would never come to the higher blessings (Starke).—Give to him that asketh.—As ye have received, so let each one minister to his neighbour.—Freely ye have received, freely give.—Jesus Christ is the Mediator of all spiritual and bodily salvation.—Whosoever confesses Jesus Christ, him also shall Christ confess.—Living fellowship with the living Christ, a power of blessing and life (Lechler).—*Silver and gold have I none, but what I have give I.* Thus may the evangelical Church this day say. Poor indeed in worldly might and wealth; but what she has and what she gives to all souls desiring salvation, is the blessed name of Jesus, the living word of Jesus, the saving grace of Jesus. And if we receive that, then we receive more than silver and gold, since it is even now said to the poor, the weak, and the wretched, Rise up and walk: Arise from the dust, and walk in newness of life.

And he took him by the hand (ver. 8). We must not only minister to souls in word, but in deed: we must, as it were, take them by the hand, in order to set them a-going (Quesnel).—*And he lifted him up.* How much more wonderful are the changes which God effects on hearts than those which happened to this lame man! But who observes them? (Quesnel).—*And he went with them into the temple.* To thank and praise God, is a comely thing.—A blessed church-going for the cured, who can now from the bottom of his heart sing the psalm of thanks, Bless the Lord, O my soul. And a blessed church-going for the apostles, who are permitted to bring with them

such a follower before God. These are the best attendants for a servant of Christ, here and hereafter—souls whom he by divine grace has saved from destruction. O God! how delightful it must be to save souls.

And all the people saw him (vers. 9, 10). If every word of the Church is a deed, and if every deed is according to the word of Jesus, and done in the name of Jesus, then will the Church stand strong in its weakness (Rudelbach).—The examples of the newly converted make the greater impression, the more apparent the blessed change is. Therefore God selected here a well-known cripple, and He selects even now a notorious sinner, in order to make manifest in him the miraculous power of His grace in Christ Jesus (Apost. Past.).—*And they were filled with wonder and amazement.* Wonder, amazement, flocking together, were the peculiar purposes and effects of miracles in the commencement of the Church. Miracles were the penitential bells by which God drew the people together to hear the sermon concerning Jesus (Apost. Past.).—God will have witnesses of His deeds and miracles.—Whether the principle Nil admirari is a sound and Christian principle?

On the whole section.—The wonderful grace of Christ with our earthly sorrows. 1. It refuses us the subordinate blessings which we desire. 2. It grants us the higher blessings which we do not expect. 3. It leads us to the highest blessings which we do not merit (Florey).—*In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk:* for, 1. It is high time to awake out of sleep; 2. Christ Himself offers strength in the word and sacrament; 3. only then will you freely and joyfully praise and thank God (Leonh. and Spieg.). —*The cure of the lame man, an image of our conversion.* 1. As he was lame from his mother's womb, so are we from birth the servants of sin. 2. As they carried him to the gate of the temple to receive alms, so were we carried to baptism in order to receive heavenly gifts. 3. As he was healed by Christ by means of the word of Peter, so also is our conversion a work of God effected by the word of the prophets and apostles. 4. As he after his cure walked and praised God, so there follows after conversion a true Christian walk and a joyful praise of God (The same).—*The heathen as beggars before the temple gate.* 1. Their condition. 2. Our duties to them (Langbein).—*The rich alms.* 1. The invitation of the Lord to the Christian: Ask what I shall give to thee. 2. The

blessed experience of the Christian, that the Lord gives above all that he can ask or think (Lisco).—*The interrupted church-going:* or, evade no business which God places in your way. 1. The apostles were interrupted in their purpose: they wished to be by themselves, when the poor cripple lies before their eyes; they wished to rest and pray, and they are called to work and act. 2. But it is a blessed interruption, and so much the more fervently is the sacrifice of prayer afterwards offered by the apostles, who had met with success in their first act in the name of Jesus, and by their *protégé*, who had found by means of them bodily healing and spiritual health.—*The best ecclesiastical wealth of our evangelical Church.* 1. "Silver and gold have I none." The Son of man also was poor, and, since the days of the apostles, the poorer the Church was in temporal things, the richer was it in spiritual things. 2. "But what I have, that give I to thee: in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk." Thus the name of Jesus, the apostolic word, and salvation in Him, are and remain the chief wealth of our Church.—*The apostles and the beggar a model of Christian care of the poor.* 1. The proper disposition from which Christian care of the poor should flow: (*a*) Love of God—the apostles on the way to the temple; and (*b*) love of our neighbour—they regard the poor man with sympathy. (Thus to take advantage of the two apostles—John's sympathetic feeling, and Peter's helping energy.) 2. The proper means which Christian care of the poor should employ: Silver and gold is not the chief concern; an alms quickly thrown to the poor costs little, and bears little fruit: but (*a*) personal and living intercourse with the poor—"Peter looked on him and said, Look on us;" and (*b*) evangelical consolation, counsel, and comfort from the word of God—"What I have, that give I to thee: In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk." 3. The proper result in which Christian care of the poor should delight: (*a*) Bodily assistance—he could rise up and walk; (*b*) spiritual health—he praised God.—*The first miracle of the apostles* a type of the blessed activity of the Christian Church. 1. Its great field of labour: among the poor in body and spirit. 2. Its true springs of life: love of God and of our neighbour. 3. Its inexhaustible treasure: the word of God with its living power, and the Holy Ghost with His gracious gifts.

B.

The Testimony of Peter before the People concerning Jesus.

Chap. iii. 11–26.

11 But as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, full of astonishment. 12 But when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why wonder ye at this? or why look ye so on us, as if through our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied before Pilate, after he had pronounced sentence to release Him. 14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted to you; 15 But ye killed the Author of life: Him God has raised from the dead; of which we are witnesses. 16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom ye see and know; and the faith, which wrought through Him, has given him this soundness in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But God has thus fulfilled what He before had shown by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Anointed should suffer. 19 Change ye therefore your minds, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 And He may send Jesus, the Messiah appointed for you: 21 Whom the heavens must receive until the times when all things are restored, which God hath of old spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets. 22 Moses has said, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever He shall say unto you. 23 And it shall come to pass that every soul that will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. 24 And all the prophets from Samuel and after, as many of them as have spoken, have foretold these days. 25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God has made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the generations of the earth be blessed. 26 To you first has God raised up His servant, and sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Ver. 11. Τοῦ ἰαθέντος χωλοῦ was inserted instead of αὐτοῦ, because a church lesson commenced with ver. 11.

Ver. 12. Instead of εὐσεβείᾳ many ancient versions have ἐξουσίᾳ, which appeared to be recommended by δυνάμει.—Ὡς ἡμῶν—πεποιηκότων instead of ὡς—πεποιηκόσι is weakly supported, and is apparently a correction.

Ver. 13. Some MSS. and versions have ὁ Θεὸς Ἀβρ. κ. Θεὸς Ἰσ. κ. Θεὸς Ἰακ.—Μέν, after which no corresponding δέ follows, is strongly attested.

Ver. 18. Bengel, Lachmann, and Tischendorf, from weighty evidence, have placed αὐτοῦ, not αὐτοῦ, after Χριστόν, not after τῶν προφητῶν.

Ver. 20. Προκεχειρισμένον instead of the unattested προκεκηρυγμένον is to be read, with Bengel, Griesbach, and modern critics.

Ver. 21. Ἀπ' αἰῶνος is to be retained as genuine: it is wanting only in a few MSS.—Τῶν instead of πάντων (textus receptus), is adopted by Griesbach and Lachmann, according to weighty evidence: πάντων, borrowed from ver. 24, was a correction for the sake of strength.

Ver. 22. Μέν is far more strongly attested than μὲν γάρ, which certainly corresponds to the logical connection.—Πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας, sometimes before and sometimes after εἶπεν, is a later addition, and is with reason expunged by Lachmann and Tischendorf.

Ver. 24. Προκατήγγειλαν is a correction instead of the simple but well-attested κατήγγειλαν.

Ver. 25. The article before υἱοί is awanting in the textus receptus, but is sufficiently attested.

Ver. 26. Ἰησοῦν after αὐτοῦ is an addition not well attested.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But as he held Peter and John.*—Peter received a call and an occasion for an address by the circumstance that a multitude of men, greatly wondering, collected around him and John, to whom the cured cripple kept close. This circumstance induced him to express himself concerning the event and concerning Jesus in general. Ἀπεκρίνατο—he answered, because the discourse was properly an answer to the question contained in the wondering looks and gestures of the multitude. —Luke indicates the locality where this concourse of men and this discourse took place, as the neighbourhood of the court, in the porch which is called Solomon's,—one of the covered passages to the court of the temple, and which had received its name from being a remnant of the original temple of Solomon, having survived the destruction of that temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The circumstance which gave immediate occasion to this concourse of people around the apostles, was, that the man who had been lame attached himself stedfastly to the apostles, and, full of gratitude, took and held them by the hand; for this is the evident meaning of κρατεῖν τινα, whilst the meaning, "to keep to one, to follow one," can by no means linguistically be derived from it.

2. The discourse of Peter is divided into two parts:—1. Information concerning the Author and design of the miracle (vers. 12–18): not we men have done it, but God, and that for the purpose of glorifying His servant Jesus, whom Israel denied and slew, but whom God has raised up. 2. Exhortation to change of mind and conversion; that the sins of the Israelites

may be forgiven, and that the blessing, according to all the promises, to be expected through Christ, may be shared by them (vers. 19–26).

3. *Why wonder ye at this?*—Peter does not censure the wonder of the people in itself, but only so far as they supposed that the cure was an independent work of the apostles. For the fixed and astonished look (*ἀτενίζετε*) had this meaning. What kind of power must these men have (*ἰδία δύναμις*)? or, What pious people must these be, that God rewards them with such miraculous gifts? This latter meaning certainly points to the idea of merit, which Luther has adopted in his translation. Peter thus shifts off from himself and John both the supposed physical and the meritorious spiritual power. The expression *πεποιηκόσι τοῦ περιπατεῖν αὐτόν* rests on the inaccurate use of the genitive of intention: literally, as if we had done something that he might be able to walk.

4. *The God of Abraham has glorified His servant Jesus.*—Here the truth in opposition to the above rejected error: not we have done the miracle, but God, the covenant God of our fathers, of the first progenitors of our nation. Here the discourse passes, at the same time, from the proper Author of the cure to its design and import: Jesus was to be glorified thereby —represented in His *δόξα*—recognised and acknowledged in His dignity and power of the higher life, by virtue of His resurrection and ascension,—in the indwelling fulness of His powers of life and salvation for the human race. But what does *παῖς Θεοῦ* import? The ancient interpreters understood it without difficulty as = *υἱὸς Θεοῦ*: Piscator the only one excepted in the seventeenth century. Bengel understood it = the servant of God, as in Matt. xii. 18. And since Nitzsch (Studien und Kritiken, 1828) has thrown light upon the subject, all modern interpreters have agreed that *παῖς Θεοῦ* is not the Son of God, but the servant of God; as this very title is used by Luke of Israel (Luke i. 54), and occurs of David (Luke i. 69; Acts iv. 25); and in our passage, besides in ver. 26 and chap. iv. 27, 30, as also in Matt. xii. 18, it corresponds to עֶבֶד יְהוָה of Isaiah.

5. *But ye denied.*—Peter expressly upbraids his hearers with their sin against Jesus, in order to excite them to change of mind. Ye have delivered up Jesus; denied Him before

Pilate; even preferred a murderer, and asked mercy for him; in short, killed Jesus. There is here a manifest gradation of guilt and deed. The apostle places the sin of the people by contrast in a yet clearer light: first, by contrasting Israel and the heathen Pilate—Pilate pronounced sentence that Jesus should be liberated; the people, on the other hand, have denied Him, their Messiah: secondly, by contrasting Jesus and Barabbas—Barabbas was a murderer; Jesus was not only innocent and holy, but the very forerunner and dispenser of life; yet, ye have liberated Barabbas and killed Jesus.

6. Peter explains how and wherefore God has glorified His servant Jesus. God has raised Him from the dead, and only in power of the name of Jesus, apprehended by faith, has this cripple been strengthened and made whole. The former occurrence, the resurrection of Jesus, we, the apostles, testify. The latter occurrence, the restoration of health and strength to the lame man, you all as eye-witnesses have seen (*ἀπέναντι πάντων ὑμῶν*).

7. *And now, brethren.*—Hitherto the apostle had shown the necessity of change of mind; now he testifies the possibility of repentance and forgiveness, and that indeed both from the side of the sinner (ver. 17) and from the side of God (ver. 18). The sin, however great it is, may yet be forgiven; for, not only on the part of the people, but even of their rulers, it was committed in ignorance. And the apostle says this with sincere affection, as is evident from the introductory address, "Brethren" (compare the formal one, *ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται*, ver. 12). On the part of God also, the sin of Israel, which consisted in the rejection and execution of their Messiah, can be forgiven; as by it the counsel of God, before determined and prophesied by all the prophets, that the Messiah should suffer, has been fulfilled.

8. *Change ye therefore your minds.*—The apostle, drawing the conclusion from what has been said (*οὖν*), and directly inviting his hearers to be converted and to change their minds, represents, not only the blotting out of their sins (*ἐξαλειφθῆναι* of a bond which is cancelled) as the result of their change of mind, but he also opens up a more comprehensive view of a future period of refreshing and blessing to be expected. This will proceed from God, will be done by Him; it will happen at

the second advent of Christ, whom for the time being the heaven has received, but whom God will send in person; and it will consist in the restoration of all things, which God has from of old promised by the prophets. In ὃν δεῖ οὐρανὸν δέξασθαι the subject is not ὃν, but οὐρανόν: the heaven must receive Him, not He must receive the heaven (Luther), which is inconsistent with the usage of δέξασθαι. Ἀποκατάστασις, according to the constant use of the word, denotes a re-establishment to an earlier condition, a restoration. (See Dogmatical and Ethical Thoughts.)

9. *Moses has said.*—Vers. 22–24 serve as the development and confirmation of what, as regards the prophetic word, was indicated in ver. 21. Moses has promised a prophet to be raised out of Israel, whom, on penalty of rejection and destruction, they were bound by all means to hear; and the later prophets, from Samuel downwards, have all prophesied of the same time.

10. *And ye are the children.*—In ver. 25 the application is made to the present and to the hearers, and that on two grounds: first, inasmuch as the promise of the blessing primarily concerned them; and, secondly, inasmuch as change of mind and conversion, as the conditions of the blessing, were also their primary duty.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL REMARKS.

1. Miraculous powers were never inherent in individual men and children of God—a delusion against which the apostles here expressly guard; but they rested always on the power and free grace of God. What the apostles (ver. 12) rejected as erroneous, was the supposition both of a magical power (ἰδία δύναμις), and of moral merit (εὐσέβεια), as the reason of the miracle. The Redeemer Himself ascribed the works which He did to the Father, who had given Him them to do; so, much more, do the apostles ascribe their miracles to God the Father. But as the miracles performed by Jesus were to bear witness of Himself and to glorify Him (John v. 20, 36; Matt. xi. 5), so also were the deeds performed by the grace and power of God, by means of the disciples, to redound to the honour of Christ, and to make His name great and glorious (ὁ Θεός—ἐδόξασε—Ἰησοῦν).

2. It is not a bare adaptation to the mode of thought and speech in Israel, when Peter says, "The God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hath glorified Jesus;" but there is contained in it the truth that the God of Abraham is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; in other words, that it is one and the same God who manifested Himself to the fathers, and who now manifests Himself through His Son: the New Covenant is founded on the Old; the Old Covenant points to Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus is called ὁ παῖς Θεοῦ, that is to say, not a servant of God, but the servant of God, in an eminent and peculiar sense, is evident from a reference to the prophecies of the Old Testament, especially to Isa. xli.; an idea which refers directly only to the work, but not to the person, of Jesus Christ. Jesus, according to this, is the person by whom God performs and brings to pass what He has determined in His counsel and promised in His word. The blessing which God promised to Abraham, and through him to mankind, is realized and bestowed by Christ: all that God has promised at all times by the prophets is fulfilled in Christ. A truly grand idea. The dignity of the person of Christ certainly follows indirectly from this,—although not immediately His Godhead, yet His intimate and peculiar union with God.

4. Peter describes Jesus according to His person, as the Holy One and the Just, not only as guiltless in opposition to the transgressor Barabbas, but also positively and perfectly holy and just,—in relation to God (ἅγιος) and to men (δίκαιος). The definite article is here of importance—indeed, even of dogmatic import; for it is evident that there is here something exclusively peculiar which elevates Jesus in a moral and religious point of view above all mankind. With this admirably agrees the appellation of Jesus, ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς,—that is, in opposition to the murderer who was the cause of the death of men, the Pioneer and Author of life, who with regard to life takes the lead (especially by His resurrection), so that we follow after Him; whilst He bestows eternal life and blessedness on those who believe on Him, and grants also bodily powers of life by means of faith in His name.

5. Change of mind and conversion from evil ways are the indispensable conditions of salvation; that is to say, conditions first of forgiveness and blotting out of past sins and present guilt

(ver. 19), and secondly, of participation in the promised blessings and divine gifts (ver. 20). The apostles never countenance the delusion that a man has a claim to salvation on account of his descent from the people of God, without personal preparation for it and without believing obedience. Here, Peter, immediately after the declaration that his hearers were the sons of the covenant, partakers of the covenant, calls them to conversion and change of mind, if they would be partakers of the blessing of Abraham, promised and given in Christ. The application of this to Christianity is obvious.

6. A magnificent general view of the divine economy, and of revelation from beginning to end, follows from the words of the apostle. That which God has promised to Abraham; that which He has announced by the mouth of Moses, of a prophet who was yet to come; that which the whole order of prophets from Samuel downwards have prophesied,—points essentially to Christ, His sufferings, the world-embracing blessing in Him, the future rectification of all things. Jesus Christ, the servant of God, whom He has sent, has come and suffered; but He is now invisible, since heaven has received Him, until God sends Him again, that is, until His second coming from heaven. This future is described as, 1. καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως, "times of refreshing," that is, a period in which rest, peace, and refreshment follow the heat, and storm, and pressure of the battle and tribulation. This time is further described as, 2. χρόνοι ἀποκαταστάσεως (the latter description is objective, the former is subjective). It is evident from the use of the term that restoration is here meant. But what shall be restored? Baumgarten answers, Nothing else than the kingdom of Israel, the entire pomp and glory of the Israelitish kingdom. But if so, the chief thing intended must altogether be supplied. The words themselves do not convey that meaning, but something far more comprehensive: all things which God has spoken by His holy prophets are to be restored; all things are to be placed in their original order—in the condition intended and promised by God. At the same time, however, we may conceive not only a restoration to a former state, but a renovation of things, partly restorative and partly surpassing everything that has ever been. And this is universal, so much the more as the sphere of vision embraces not simply Israel, but mankind: the blessing promised

to Abraham shall be certainly shared in by all the kindreds of the earth; and although the Israelites are called the children of the covenant, yet this does not imply exclusiveness, monopoly, or prerogative, but only priority; for not to Israel only, but to Israel first of all, is Christ sent (ver. 26); and accordingly it is presupposed and indirectly testified, that Christ, and the blessing in Him, is appointed also for the Gentiles, although in the second place.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

And as the lame man held Peter and John (ver. 11). *The blessed bond of attachment between the awakened children of God and their spiritual fathers.* 1. To the strengthening of the children in Christ. 2. To the encouragement of their spiritual fathers. 3. To the edification of the Church. 4. To the honour of the Lord.

Why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly at us? (ver. 12). An impressive question of all instruments of the Lord to us, in considering the mighty acts of God. 1. To divert us (*a*) from a carnal astonishment at the external appearances of events; and (*b*) from an over-estimation of human instruments, with their power and merit. 2. To direct us (*a*) to the Lord, who alone does wonders; and (*b*) to ourselves,—our sin, our duty, our salvation.—*Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the glory,* the confession of all the true servants of God (Starke).—We run after new wonders, and marvel at them, and forget the old wonders, and do not profit by them, Ps. cvi. 21, 22 (Quesnel).—God's works become clear only in the light of God's word.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (vers. 13, 14). The light which falls from this proposition. 1. On the Old Covenant, as the type and preparation of the New. 2. On the New covenant, as the unveiling and fulfilment of the Old.—*And ye denied Him.* Peter himself had formerly denied the Lord Jesus; but as this sin was forgiven him by his Saviour, so he now has the boldness to rebuke the same sin in others.

Jesus the Prince of life (ver. 15). 1. Denied and killed by the world. 2. Raised up and glorified by God. 3. Confessed and testified in the Church.—"Ye thought it for evil, but God

meant it unto good" (Gen. l. 20): this was in the highest sense fulfilled in Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One (Starke).—God's gifts and graces in the hands of men are just what Christ was in the hands of the Jews: men can do nothing but destroy them; God only can preserve or quicken them (Quesnel).—*Christ the Holy One and the Just,* in the full sense: not only, 1. as opposed to the murderer Barabbas, the representative of sinful humanity; but also, 2. in the sight of His God and Father.—Christ the Holy One, also the Prince of life.—*Why do the apostles of the Lord, in such an emphatic manner, call themselves witnesses of His resurrection?* (Schleiermacher). 1. In reference to themselves: in consciousness of their own and of human weakness in general, and in thankful adoration of the benignity with which our heavenly Father came to the help of our weakness. 2. In reference to the Redeemer: His resurrection contains the judgment of God on His preceding death, and points to His eternal and spiritual presence in the Church.

Miraculous faith (ver. 16). "A miracle is the dearest child of faith," says the poet. 1. Faith performs the miracle (Peter and John). 2. Faith experiences the miracle (the lame man who, although not before the miracle, yet after it, appears as a believer). 3. Faith comprehends the miracle (the believing hearers).

Ye did it through ignorance (ver. 17). Christ on the cross: "They know not what they do." Paul to Timothy: "I did it ignorantly." 1. Whom this saying concerns? Not all. 2. What purpose it ought to serve? Not for justification.—Ignorance lessens guilt, but does not remove it; for itself may be the result of great guilt (Gerlach).

Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out (ver. 19). This is the fullest charter of repentance, announcing grace and pardon to such great sinners. Such a pardon is nowhere found in history: where this is not accepted, there is no more salvation (Starke).—These words contain a glorious model how to preach repentance in a truly apostolic manner. We may err in two ways, and demand either too much or too little. We are always ready to run into extremes, and either excite in people too soon and too hastily the hope of forgiveness of sins, or demand from them too much holiness before we assure them of forgiveness. The apostles teach us the true medium (Apost.

Past.).—Repent, or change your mind, and be converted, or direct your feet to the way of peace, both belong together (The same).—*See in Peter's sermon the four offices of the Holy Ghost.* 1. To reprove (vers. 13–15). 2. To teach (vers. 13, 15, 16, 18, 21–25). 3. To exhort (ver. 19). 4. To comfort (vers. 20, 26).

Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord (ver. 20). How they happen to the penitent and believing. 1. In external life, after the heat of trouble. 2. In the internal life, after the fire of repentance. 3. In the eternal life, after the toils of earth.—When fightings within and without rage most hotly, then God appears with His refreshing (Gen. xviii. 1; Isa. xxxviii. 17).—At length the eternal refreshing will come, when we are removed to that place where no heat shall light on us (Rev. vii. 16), (Starke).—All true refreshing in time and eternity must come from the presence of the Lord (The same).

The threefold restoration (ver. 21). 1. It has taken place in the New Testament salvation. 2. It ought to take place in our conversion. 3. It will take place at the end of the world (Schmidt).

Christ and Moses (ver. 22), related to each other: 1. As prophecy and fulfilment; 2. as law and Gospel; 3. as servant and Son (Leonh. and Spiegel.).—*Christ a Prophet, and yet more than a prophet.* 1. He teaches the way of God rightly, and is Himself that way. 2. He prophesies, and is the aim and end of all prophecy. 3. He is anointed with the Holy Spirit, and is the dispenser of the Spirit.—*The Prophet of the New Covenant.* 1. Who is He? 2. What is His vocation? 3. What is our duty to Him? (Langbein).—All the promises of God are yea and amen in Him.

On the whole section.—The threefold testimony of Peter concerning Christ. 1. He is the substance of all miracles (vers. 12–17). 2. He is the Redeemer of all souls (vers. 18–21). 3. He is the Accomplisher of all prophecies (vers. 22–26) (Lisco).—*To the Lord alone be the glory.* Peter expresses this thought whilst he points, 1. to the weakness of himself and his fellow-apostle; 2. to the sins of his hearers and his nation; 3. to God's glorious testimony of Christ; 4. to the great salvation which in Him is designed for all His people.

C.

The Arrest of Peter and John, who, however, after a powerful defence before the Chief Council, are liberated.

Chap. iv. 1–22.

1 But whilst they spake to the people, the priests, and the captain of the guard, and the Sadducees, came upon them; 2 Being annoyed because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold until the morning of the next day: for it was already evening. 4 But many of them who heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. 5 And when the morning came, their rulers, and elders, and scribes in Jerusalem, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and all who were of the kindred of the high priest, were assembled together. 7 And they placed them in the midst, and asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we are called to account this day for the good done to a diseased man, by what means he has been saved: 10 Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him does this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the corner-stone. 12 And there is salvation in no other, for no other name under heaven is given among men whereby we shall be saved.

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and observed that they were unlearned and simple men, they marvelled; also they knew that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say against it. 15 But when they had called them to go aside out of the council, they conferred together, 16 Saying, What will we do to these men? for that a notable miracle has been done by them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But in order that it spread no further among the people, let us strictly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Judge ye, whether it is right before God that we obey you more than God. 20 For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard. 21 But they further threatened them, and let them go, not finding how they could punish them, because of the people: for they all glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was shown.

Ver. 2. Τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν is decidedly to be preferred to the weakly attested and usual expression τῶν νεκρῶν.

Ver. 5. Ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ has the decided preponderance of MSS., and

has therefore been preferred by Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf to the preposition εἰς.

Ver. 6. The nominatives Ἄννας, etc., suppose συνήχθησαν, which is found in an old MS. (D.); but the accusative is more correct.

Ver. 7. Ἐν μέσῳ is sufficiently attested, instead of ἐν τῷ μέσῳ.

Ver. 8. Lachmann omits τοῦ Ἰσραήλ on the authority of two old cursive MSS.; but there is weighty evidence for them.

Ver. 11. Οἰκοδόμων is, on the authority of the best MSS. and other testimonies, to be preferred to οἰκοδομούντων, a correction to suit the LXX., in Ps. cxviii. 22, and also Matt. xxi. 42.

Ver. 12. Οὐδὲ γάρ is better attested than οὔτε, which Meyer defends: οὐδέ is also entirely suitable, inasmuch as a further denial, different from the former, follows.

Ver. 16. Ποιήσομεν is by Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf preferred to the conjunctive ποιήσωμεν, which is not so well attested, and apparently a correction on account of its deliberative form.

Ver. 17. Ἀπειλησώμεθα is to be preferred to the ind. fut. ἀπειλησόμεθα: which was placed without doubt on account of ποιήσομεν, ver. 16, instead of the original conj. aor. Ἀπειλῇ is awanting in some cursive MSS., and is therefore erased by Lachmann; but it might easily have been omitted in copying.

Ver. 18. Αὐτοῖς after παρήγγειλαν is an addition attested by few MSS.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *The priests came upon them.*—The interference of the hierarchy against the apostles (in which the Jewish and priestly commander on duty of the Levitical guard of the temple was at the service of the priests and Sadducees) had a twofold motive. The Sadducees were annoyed, because the apostles, in testifying of the resurrection of Jesus, testified along with it of the resurrection in general: this was a thorn in their side. The priests also could not endure that the apostles should teach the multitude, without possessing lawful authority, which was regarded as a presumptuous encroachment on the privileges of the Levitical priesthood. The sadducean motive is stated, but it did not work exclusively; at least, in the whole transaction before the council it was not brought forward at all.

2. *But many of them who heard the word believed.*—Whilst the members of the hierarchy, the official heads and representatives of Israel, interfered in a hostile manner, and even used force and arrested the two apostles, the apostolic testimony produced a strong impression upon a considerable number of unprejudiced and disinterested hearers, who were by it led to the faith and converted. They did not indeed believe on account of

the event itself—the miracle which they had witnessed: this had only excited attention and wonder: but the word of the apostles, their testimony of Christ, ὁ λόγος (chap. iv. 4), was the cause of their conversion. There was a great movement in advance, so that the number of believers was considerably increased. The number of men who belonged to the Church amounted now to 5000, whilst the women are not here included. On the day of Pentecost, the increase to the original number of the Church amounted to 3000. Moreover, a gradual increase may be supposed between that day and this event, which is not likely to have immediately followed Pentecost. At all events, this last event forms an epoch in the history of the primitive Church. As Christ is set for the fall of some and the rising again of others, so the effect of this miracle and of the apostolic testimony led some to faith, whilst it stirred up the opposition of others. The internal decision, either for Christ or against Him, was brought near to all.

3. *When the morning came.*—The chief hierarchical court, the Sanhedrim, met next morning. On the day before, it was too late; for about three in the afternoon, Peter and John saw the lame man for the first time: some time would probably elapse before Peter was induced to address the people: the discourse itself, here given only in outline, would also occupy a considerable time: so that it might have been six in the evening when the apostles were arrested. On the morning, then, there was a formal and full session of the Sanhedrim. Three classes of its members are here mentioned: the chief priests, the elders of the people, and the scribes. Of the first class, some are specified by name: the former high priest Annas (the Ananas of Josephus), his son-in-law the high priest in office, Caiaphas, and two other unknown members of the family of the high priest.

4. *By what power have ye done this?*—The question about which the apostles are examined relates not to the discourse, but to the miracle which had given occasion to it (ἐποιήσατε τοῦτο); and Peter's answer corresponds with this question. The special point of inquiry, in reference to the miracle performed, was the power by which the apostles had acted,—the person (ὄνομα) whom they had named, and on whom they had relied.

5. *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost.*—As regards the miracle, Peter in his answer testifies (*a*) that it was a good deed

(εὐεργεσία) and not an evil deed which he and John had performed; (*b*) that the impotent man was actually healed, made whole, saved (σέσωσται, ὑγιής), for which he appeals to the man himself who was present; (*c*) that the power of healing and salvation resided in Jesus Christ, the Crucified and the Risen One; yea, (*d*) that all salvation is wholly and entirely given in Jesus Christ for men in general, as far as the heaven extends.

6. *Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel.*—As regards his judges, Peter expressly acknowledges them as the lawful and authoritative rulers and representatives of Israel, in such a manner that what was said to them is spoken to the whole people: they were, as it were, the ear of the people, as well as its mouth. They were the builders who were called upon, authorized, and bound to build the house of God (οἰκοδόμων). But as Peter honestly and respectfully acknowledges the dignity of the members of the Sanhedrim, he also boldly and openly asserts that they had erred,—erred greatly and sinned grievously; they had esteemed that stone as nothing, thrown it away as useless, which yet was destined to be the foundation-stone, and had actually become so: they had crucified Him whom God had raised up, and who is given as the only means and medium of salvation.

7. *Now when they saw the boldness.*—The impression which the apostles, and the actual fact of the miracle, made on the Sanhedrim, was so strong that they could not resist it. On the one hand, the παῤῥησία of Peter and John, the unrestrained boldness and decided assurance with which they stood up and defended themselves, even passing over from the position of the accused to that of attack and refutation, excited their greatest wonder; especially as the observation intruded itself upon them, that no rabbinical book and school learning assisted these men (ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται); along with which, also, the recollection by degrees gleamed and dawned on the council, that they had seen these two very men at an earlier period in company with Jesus; a circumstance which at first had not struck them so much. On the other hand, the man who had been made whole stood by the side of the apostles, as a quiet but irrefragable witness to the reality of the miracle in question, without doubt summoned there by the Sanhedrim, because they thought to turn him into a witness for the charge.

8. *Then commanded they them to go aside.*—The consultation of the Sanhedrim, after the apostles and the cured cripple had in the meantime been dismissed from the place of meeting, became very difficult, because their will would not bend before the clear judgment of their own conscience, and before the fact of the miracle, not only evident to the whole city, but also indisputable by themselves. They would not believe on Jesus, they would do all in their power to prevent the spread of the truth of Christ and the increase of His Church, they would hold the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. i. 18). They feel that they dare do nothing, that they could not injure the apostles in the name of God and justice; and yet they stood firm to the resolution: We must not permit this matter to gain ground. Thus an internal decision, full of important results, was formed by the highest authority of Israel. It was the first time, since the sufferings and crucifixion of Christ, that the rulers of Israel were called to act in relation to the disciples of Jesus; but from this time they proceeded on the path which was now taken.

9. *Let us strictly threaten them.*—The resolution and mode of acting on which they agreed was to waive all reproof for the present, but that preventive measures should be taken for the future. These consisted in a strict and absolute command, joined to threats of punishment, not to make the confession of Jesus a subject of conversation with any one (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ), to make no mention of Him in private conversation, far less to teach Jesus publicly (μὴ φθέγγεσθαι μηδὲ διδάσκειν).

10. *But Peter.*—With manly boldness, Peter and John replied, appealing to the conscience and the reason of their judges, whether it were right before God that they, the apostles, should hearken to this human prohibition rather than to the command and will of God. Bengel well remarks: non facile mundus tanta perversitate suas leges contra causam Dei tuetur, ut naturalis æquitas etiam in intellectu plane obruatur. Yea, they openly declare that they cannot desist from speaking what they have seen and heard. They can do nothing else, for the love of Christ, of which their heart is full, constrains them, and the overpowering assurance, "God wills it," commands them to speak and to testify.

11. *And they let them go.*—The conscientious and manful declaration of the apostles, and the consequent threat of the

Sanhedrim (who abstained from punishing chiefly out of regard to the disposition of the people, who were stirred up by the miracle), made conflicts to be expected in the future. And how soon these would occur, to what extent the enmity would reach, depended entirely on the disposition of the people. This time the people were *sanior quam qui præsunt* (Bengel); and the public expression of opinion made a punitive interference hazardous. The council did not find (τὸ πῶς κολάσωνται αὐτούς) how they could punish the apostles (without hazard), and that on account of the people. But another time, should the people themselves be stirred up, or should they only be indifferent, the blow might then be struck with full force.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Not the miracle itself, but the discourse occasioned by it, the doctrine of the apostles, particularly the word of Jesus, the Risen One, excited this opposition and persecution. The world can well endure bare morality, or even abstract evangelical truth; whereas the opposition of the natural heart is aroused when Jesus Christ, the Crucified and Risen One, is personally proclaimed. But in the person of Christ the believing heart has everything. In proclaiming Jesus, the apostles preached also the resurrection of the dead. When Jesus is proclaimed, the righteousness and grace of God—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—are also proclaimed. In Him, the believing heart, the thinking spirit, the conscience requiring salvation, has everything which man needs.

2. That Christ lives and reigns, clearly appears from the history of persecutions. It is seen in this first persecution against the two apostles; for apart from the faith of the two apostles being proved, strengthened, and purified by their arrest and the judicial proceedings against them, the fact itself—that Peter obtained the opportunity by the judicial examination to testify of Jesus, as the Mediator of all salvation, before the highest court of Israel, which under other circumstances would have been utterly impossible,—was a proof that Christ rules, and that everything which the enemies of His kingdom intend for evil, He turns for the good of believers and of His Church. The result of the trial completely confirmed the truth.

3. It was in a peculiar manner the accomplishment of an

important promise of Jesus, that Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost when he had to defend himself before the chief council. On two different occasions—namely, first, on the mission of the twelve (Matt. x. 19), and, secondly, in His eschatological discourse (Luke xxi. 14)—Jesus had promised to His disciples, that in their trial before rulers and in the synagogues, the Holy Ghost would speak in and through them, so that it was unnecessary for them to be careful how or what they should say in their defence, yea, that their adversaries would not be able to resist or answer their wisdom and eloquence. Here, for the first time, the promise was fulfilled. Not before, but precisely at the moment when it was necessary and important (πότε), Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost; that is, the Holy Spirit, who since Pentecost dwelt in him and the other disciples, was now poured forth in full strength into his spirit and heart, so that he was able to defend himself and to bear testimony for Jesus, not only fearlessly, courageously, joyfully, and boldly (παῤῥησία), but also with wisdom and in the most suitable language. Both πῶς and τί ἀπολογήσησθε (Luke xii. 11) were given to the apostles: it was granted to them by the Spirit to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Here is inspiration; and indeed at once in disposition, thought, and expression.

4. It is a special proof of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that Peter, in his defence concerning a single fact, was able so clearly and fully to declare such a fundamental truth as that of salvation in Jesus Christ alone. Salvation (that is, deliverance, redemption, and relief from bodily and spiritual necessities, grace and blessing in time and eternity) is in Jesus Christ, in Him only, and in Him for all. This is the Christian confession; the fundamental truth of Christianity. That everything which refers to the sinfulness of man, to the person of Jesus Christ Himself, to the way of salvation, is included therein, needs only to be mentioned. But our attention may be directed to the protection which this fundamental proposition affords against unevangelical thought, doctrine, and practice. It is a denial of the truth, a deviation from the narrow line of salvation, when Christ is recognised as a Saviour indeed, but is not represented as the entire and only ground of salvation. On this the Romish and other errors are founded. And if once the narrow path of saving truth be forsaken, it is easy to deviate farther from it.

5. That faith is not an affair of mathematical evidence and demonstration, of intellectual discernment and conviction, but of the heart and will, is evident from the result of this judicial transaction. The cured cripple stood as a visible proof, an unexceptionable witness. That he was formerly helpless, and now sound and strong, no one could think of confuting. That this change and healing were effected by the apostles in the name of Jesus, no one questioned. There was nothing awanting to an intellectual conviction in the members of the Sanhedrim. Yet they resisted, and would put down and prevent all preaching or speaking of Jesus. They will not; their heart bends not: faith belongs not to every man.

6. As the council would impose silence concerning Jesus on the apostles, whilst Jesus Himself had called them to be witnesses, there existed what is called a collision of duties; that is to say, at first sight one duty appeared to contradict another duty. The council had issued a prohibition, and to obey magistrates is a matter of conscience; the divine call had enjoined the opposite, and to fulfil this is also a matter of conscience. How is the difficulty to be got over with an unviolated conscience? The apostles do not waver; they give a plain declaration, and act according to it; and indeed in a morally unblameable and perfectly exemplary manner. They refuse obedience to the lawful authority respected by them, solely on the ground of unconditional obedience to God; they feel themselves bound to decline positively the line of conduct prescribed by the council, because to leave off the confession and the testimony of Jesus Christ was entirely immoral, indeed, was morally impossible (see Rothe's Theological Ethics, iii. p. 357). But they confine themselves to a refusal of obedience, and refrain entirely from all positive opposition, that is, from resistance. No word or hint indicates this; on the contrary, according to their declaration, we must expect that the apostles would submit without resistance to whatever punishments and measures the authorities might have recourse to against them, in case of disobedience. But one point is yet to be expressly observed. The apostles have certainly, in opposition to the Sanhedrim, appealed to their conscience, which does not permit them to be silent, but they also appeal to the will of God, which commands them to speak; and this points to the express command of Christ (chap. i. 8), to the clear and sure word of

God. It is one-sided only to speak of "their conscience," of "the fundamental power of the Spirit which rested upon them," and to maintain that "the apostles oppose to this objective authority the subjective authority of their own conviction, as established by the Spirit" (Baumgarten, vol. i. p. 102, English translation). The conscience may err, and the spirit may be enthusiastic and fanatical, but the clear and sure word and command of God leads to the right course. And this the apostles follow.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

And as they spake to the people (ver. 1). We must endeavour, when God visits us with troubles, to be found at our calling (Starke).—*The priests, and the captain, and the Sadducees.* If Christ performs a good work by His apostles, Satan with his apostles, both of spiritual and worldly condition, is soon behind them.—Against true Christianity, the pharisaical priests take the assistance even of Herodians or Sadducees, Mat. xxii. 15, 16 (Starke).—Although the apostles are surprised by their enemies in the midst of their discourse, yet this was not permitted until they had declared the substance of the Gospel, and applied it to the hearts of their hearers. The Lord knows how to order the lot of His faithful servants, that each must finish his course and daily task, before the enemy is permitted to place a hindrance in their way (Apost. Past.).

Being grieved that they taught the people (ver. 2). God's works the world cannot prevent (the healing of the lame man), but it takes the field to oppose God's word.—*And proclaimed through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.* As good morality, even the world itself is pleased with the doctrine of Christ. But when we wish to introduce it into the invisible and eternal, by the hope held before it, then the world thrusts the Gospel from it with violence (Rieger).—Pride, self-interest, and envy cause persons to be hated on account of the truth, and truths on account of the persons (Starke).

And laid hands on them and put them in hold (ver. 3). Thus fares it with the Gospel: it brings good to the world, and receives evil from the world (Starke).—This is the way of irreligion and hypocrisy; they do not combat with reason, but with weapons and force.—When a man has no convincing arguments, he betakes

himself to blows: when he has no conclusive proofs, he lays hold on fetters and bonds.—Trouble in the world is the wages of the preacher and the seal of the word (Quesnel).—Blessed imprisonment which promotes the liberty of so many souls!—Now Peter might reflect on his former words, "I am ready to go with Thee to prison:" as the "hereafter" commenced, of which his Master had spoken, "Thou wilt follow Me hereafter" (Rieger).—*It was already evening.* Thus they had time through the whole night for prayer, so that they might strengthen themselves in the power of Christ, for their answer on the morrow (Apost. Past.).

Howbeit many of them believed (ver. 4). The truth may be oppressed, but not suppressed: the preacher may be bound, but not the word (Quesnel).—*The blessed fellowship of life and suffering between shepherds and flocks.* 1. God comforts the persecuted teachers by the increase of the flocks. 2. God strengthens the flocks by the stedfastness of the shepherds.

And it came to pass on the morrow that there were assembled (ver. 5). With external imprisonment, there may be great internal peace; and with external liberty, there may be severe imprisonment and disquietude.—When it is against Christ and the Church, the wicked willingly assemble together; neither sleep nor anything else prevents them (Starke).—*The rulers, and elders, and scribes.* The tribunal before which the apostles were summoned consisted of men of power (rulers), of wisdom and experience (elders), and of those who ought to have a discernment of the true and pure doctrine (scribes). How the enemy collects together all possible means against the kingdom of Christ! (Apost. Past.).

By what power have ye done this? (ver. 7). The enemies cannot deny the fact, they ask only concerning the cause: a noble testimony of the truth and certainty of the Gospel (Apost. Past.).—The world looks at the ungodly through its fingers, but not so at the true teacher and Christian. Many evil-doers remained unpunished in Jerusalem, but the apostles were punished for doing good (Starke).

Peter filled with the Holy Ghost (ver. 8). Now is fulfilled what the Lord had to His chosen witnesses foretold—"They will deliver you up to the councils;" had commanded—"Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves;" and had promised—"It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak: it is the Spirit of

the Father which speaketh in you."—*The Holy Spirit of witness*, as a spirit of the wisdom of the serpent and the innocence of the dove, of the courage of the lion and the patience of the lamb, seen in the testimony of Peter before the council.

Whom ye crucified, Him hath God raised from the dead (ver. 10). Man's sentence—He is guilty of death: God's sentence—He is declared to be the Prince of life.

This is the stone (ver. 11). Christ the corner-stone, 1. for the fall, and, 2. for the rising again of many.—*The divine Master-Builder and the human builders.* The new spiritual building stood before the rulers: five thousand living stones built upon the living corner-stone; and the holy apostles and prophets, the true builders, calling all men to the building of this spiritual temple. This sentence in the Psalms was peculiarly dear to Peter: of it he might say, "This is my sentence;" for his name, Peter, reminded him continually of that stone (Besser).—Wherefore, although kings, princes, bishops, lords, holy, wise, prudent, rich and learned people persecute the Gospel, what marvel? Who else should do it? If it is to be persecuted, these must do it, for they are the builders. And they do it also in their official capacity; for they must take care that *their* building acquire no breach, rent, or deformity (Luther).

Neither is there salvation in any other (ver. 12). This is, 1. the substance of every apostolical announcement; 2. the experience of every pardoned sinner; 3. the strength of every courageous confession; and 4. the foundation of all missionary preaching of the Church (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The old and yet never antiquated testimony: Neither is there salvation in any other.* 1. Behold how God Himself has chosen Him for the corner-stone (ver. 11). 2. Behold how His word recovers the sick (ver. 14). 3. Behold the joyful confession of His servants (ver. 13). 4. Behold the silent avowal of His enemies (ver. 14).—*No other name.* The name is to God of supreme importance. His name goes through the whole world by the word. He wills not to be visibly present with us, but we are to hear Him only in the word. In the next world, the name and the word will cease, and we will see the only-begotten Son of God as He is, according as it is written, 1 John iii. 2; but in this world we see Him not, but must hear Him in the word. This same word which is preached of Him, is that which avails. The

name of the only-begotten Son of God is everything. When one hears the name of Jesus, then ought everything to tremble, which is unbelieving and ungodly in heaven and in earth; and again ought everything to spring up, leap, and be glad, which is believing. As St Paul says, Phil. ii. 10, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of all who are in heaven and on earth." When one utters the name of Jesus, the world receives its death-blow, and the devil must flee a hundred miles away (Luther).—*Whereby we ought to be saved.* Herein is the whole of evangelical preaching comprehended. 1. Its promise—"to be saved." 2. Its command—"we ought" (After Stier).

The boldness of Peter and John (ver. 13). Moses' countenance, when he came from Sinai, shone with the majesty of the law; the countenance of Peter, and of an evangelical preacher, when he descends from the pulpit, shines with the blessedness of the Gospel.—*The true joyfulness of a witness of God.* 1. On what it is founded: on the experience of grace in his heart, on the pure word of God in his mouth, on the exemplary walk in the ways of God. 2. How it shows itself: in the pulpit by the joyful opening of the mouth, in the world by the fearless testimony of the truth, under the cross by peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. 3. How it works: to the confusion of the adversaries, the building up of the Church, and the glory of God.—*Two excellent means for the witnesses of Christ to stop the mouths of enemies and blasphemers.* 1. To persevere joyfully in their testimony. 2. To point to the fruits of their work.—*They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.* A great and glorious mark of the true witnesses of the Lord. It is not enough for a witness of Jesus that one says, It appears that the man was in the world and has associated with men: but the true character of Jesus must be evident in us, by which the world is convinced that we have been and still are with Jesus (Apost. Past.).

And they commanded them to go out (ver. 15). The wisdom of God is obliged to depart from the council-chamber, and is shut out of it, and folly alone sits in council: what will then issue from it? (Gossner).

What shall we do to these men? (ver. 16). Instead of inquiring, What shall we do to be saved? they inquire, What shall we do to these men, in order to shut their mouths? So

great is the blindness of the ungodly (Starke).—The longer we defer our salvation, the more difficult does the knowledge of it become (Wolf).

But that it spread no farther among the people (ver. 17). When the enemies of the truth can neither deny nor extirpate the truth of Jesus Christ, they proceed in their unholy work to cast up barriers, ramparts, and walls, that it might not spread or gain further ground (Apost. Past.).

Nor teach in the name of Jesus (ver. 18). The enemies do not entirely forbid the disciples to teach and to perform miracles: they limit their prohibition to teaching in the name of Jesus. The world can bear all sermons and deeds; but the name of Jesus, the preaching of the cross, and the salvation of souls from this source, is what it cannot suffer (Apost. Past.).

Judge ye (ver. 19). *The appeal to reason and conscience in matters of divine truth.* 1. Justified and enjoined by confidence (*a*) in the power of the truth, and (*b*) in the remains of a sense of truth even in the adversaries. 2. But not the last resort; for (*a*) the cloudy reason and the fallible conscience of sinful man are not appointed as the highest tribunal above the word of God; and (*b*) have, in point of fact, blindly decided and falsely judged in divine things a hundred times, from the time of Annas and Caiaphas to this day.—*We must obey God rather than men.* 1. We must obey human authority, both actively and passively, in everything which belongs to their office, for they bear the sword of God. "Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." 2. But God is to be obeyed rather than men: first, because even when we obey men, we obey them for God's sake, respecting in human ordinance the divine command; and, secondly, when the command of men is opposed to the command of God (not only against the divine command founded on a fallible conscience, but also founded on the infallible word of God), then, for the sake of God, we refuse obedience to men; not secretly conspiring, but openly and respectfully, as Peter here, "We cannot do otherwise;" not with carnal weapons, but like the apostles fighting with the sword of the Spirit; not in an aggressive and revolutionizing manner, but passively resisting, and, with the apostles and martyrs, rather suffering injustice twice than doing injustice once. Like Luther at Worms: "Unless I be confuted and convinced by the tes-

timony of Scripture, or by open and clear grounds and reasons, and also those sayings, adduced and brought forward by me, be confuted, and my conscience be captivated by the word of God, I can and will recall nothing, because it is neither safe nor advisable to do anything against conscience. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. So help me God."—*We must obey God rather than men.* 1. How important and necessary this principle was for the first founding of the Church, and will always be for its continuance. 2. How, along with this, the necessary and wholesome obedience to men retains its full rights (Schleiermacher).—Peter's word, "We must obey God rather than men," a heavy and cutting sword, not for children and boys to play with, but for men and heroes to use in the holy wars of the Lord.—*Judge ye, whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you more than God.* Fanatics have more than once thrown this word as a firebrand among men, and excited by it tumult and confusion. But when did ever Peter and John, or any other disciple of the Lord, raise up an armed hand against the chief council? They came indeed together and lifted up their hands, but not against the authorities, but to the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, and prayed. Not to obey when one in authority commands you to do what is sinful, rather to suffer yourselves to be torn in pieces than to execute a command which is expressly against God; and to lift up an armed hand and stir up others: these are two very different things (Tholuck).

We cannot do otherwise (ver. 20). If they could, three things must not be: the world must not be full of the sick; Jesus Christ must not be the only Saviour of all the sick; the apostles themselves must not be healed by Him (Besser).—*We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* 1. We speak willingly of God's almighty power, which rules and gloriously directs everything. 2. We praise yet more willingly His tender love, which sent His only-begotten Son into an otherwise lost world. 3. We proclaim most willingly the blessed experience of His grace, which fills the heart with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Lisco).—*The manifestations of the Risen One to His true confessors.* 1. He puts His words in their mouth. 2. He implants His strength in their heart. 3. He protects them in all their ways.—Hatred increases with the

extent of Christianity, suffering with hatred, help with suffering, and strength with help (Florey).—*The obstinacy of the enemies and friends of the Lord.* 1. Of the enemies: they cannot contradict His word, yet they attack it; they cannot hinder His power, yet they strive against it; they cannot deny His blessing, yet they flee from it. 2. Of the friends: the world questions their faith, yet they found it firmly on the word of the Lord; the world rejects their faith, yet they confess it openly in obedience to the Lord; the world persecutes their faith, yet they suffer gladly for it, from love to the Lord (The same).

And they let them go (ver. 21, likewise in connection with the whole). *The fight of the Gospel with the world.* 1. How does it arise? 2. With what weapons should it be carried on by the defenders of the Gospel? 3. What is its design, according to the counsel of God, for them and for the kingdom of Christ in general? (Rudelbach).—*Peter and John on their trial;* a type of, 1. the suffering, 2. the witnessing, and 3. the triumphing Church (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The four chief props of apologetics.* 1. Proof from miracles (the lame man). 2. Proof from prophecy and Scripture (ver. 11). 3. Proof from history (ver. 21). 4. Proof from the heart and experience (ver. 13) (Schmidt).—How Jesus Christ in His members manifests Himself always as living and invincible before the tribunal, 1. of worldly authority, 2. of worldly wisdom, 3. of the world's history, 4. of conscience (Albert Knapp).—*How Jesus, the Risen One, rules in the midst of His enemies.* 1. They cannot quench His word. 2. They cannot deny His work. 3. They cannot frighten His servants. 4. They cannot impede His kingdom.

D.

The Strengthening of the Faith and the Advancement of the Church by these occurrences. The Public Spirit and Brotherly Love of Believers.

Chap. iv. 23–37.

23 And, being let go, they came to their own, and declared all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. 24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice with one accord to God, and said, Lord, Thou who hast made heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all that therein is, 25 Who by the mouth of David Thy servant, hast said, Why rage the heathen, and the people imagine a vain thing? 26 The kings of the earth stand up, and the

princes are gathered together against the Lord, and against His Anointed. 27 For of a truth against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together in this city, 28 To do whatever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and give unto Thy servants that with all joyfulness they may speak Thy word, 30 In order that Thou mayest stretch forth Thy hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus. 31 And when they had prayed, the place shook where they were assembled, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with joyfulness.

32 And the multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that what he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 For there was none among them that needed: for as many among them as possessed fields or houses sold them, and brought the price of what was sold, 35 And laid it at the apostles' feet: and it was distributed to every man according as he had need. 36 And Joseph, called by the apostles Barnabas, that is, a son of consolation, a Levite, a native of Cyprus, 37 Having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Ver. 24. Δέσποτα σὺ ὁ ποιήσας. Ὁ Θεός between σύ and ὁ ποιήσας is awanting in important MSS., and appears to be one of the many insertions for the purpose of embellishing the simple prayer.

Ver. 25. Ὁ διὰ στόματος Δαυὶδ παιδός σου εἰπών: a number of variations, among which τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν and διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου are the most important, bear the character of insertions for the sake of embellishment.

Ver. 27. Ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ is, according to external testimony, undoubtedly genuine: and the internal reasons for considering the words a gloss are by no means weighty.

Ver. 36. The most important MSS. and versions read Ἰωσῆφ: that the less authentic reading Ἰωσῆς is a correction according to Acts i. 23, is an arbitrary assumption.—Ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων is better attested than ὑπό, and would hardly have existed if the more strictly grammatical reading ὑπό stood originally.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *They came to their own.*—Liberated from the council-chamber, where they felt themselves not at home, in the midst of vigilant enemies, the apostles betook themselves πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους. Who were these? Nothing is more probable than that they were the believers—the disciples of Jesus. Thus Kuinoel and Baumgarten. To suppose the households of the apostles (Olshausen) is too narrow, nor is it suggested by the passage. To limit the idea to the apostolic circle, as lately Meyer and De

Wette, after Beza, have done, is supported neither by ver. 32, where ἴδιοι is opposed to πλῆθος τῶν πιστευσάντων, nor by ver. 31, where it is said of those assembled that "they spake the word of God." This last expression is not identical with public and preceptive testimony of Christ (compare ver. 33), for λαλεῖν denotes free conversation, not solemn discourse; and this may very well be said of all believers. With regard to the first reason, in no instance were all believers, present in Jerusalem (whose number is given at 5000 men), assembled in one place. Thus then the apostles betook themselves to the believers, to the Christian Church, including naturally their fellow-apostles, without however supposing that the entire number of disciples could be present in this assembly. They felt at home, as in a family circle: and the Church itself had naturally with anxious sympathy, and certainly also with continued prayer and supplication, followed the fate of the apostles: it had therefore a right to be made acquainted with the occurrences.

2. *They lifted up their voices.*—After the apostles had thus communicated to them, not how they themselves had behaved, but the threats and commands of the rulers, the hearers lifted up their voices with one accord in prayer. But how are we to understand this? Bengel and others suppose that Peter spoke first, and the others followed with a loud voice; but this does not agree with the circumstance that Peter and John gave the account, and those, who heard, prayed (οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες—εἶπον). Also Baumgarten's supposition—that the whole Church sung the second Psalm and prayed, and that Peter thereupon made an application of this psalm, in the words which are given, to the present emergency—has, partly the circumstance already stated against it, and partly this also, that the words of the psalm and their application are interwoven together, and the text gives no support for such a separation. Meyer avoids this difficulty by the supposition that vers. 24–30 was a form of prayer which had been composed at an earlier period, under the fresh impression of the sufferings of Jesus, and under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and which was at this time spoken with one accord and aloud by the assembled apostles. But setting aside the incompatibility of the idea of a form of prayer, recited by heart, in such a situation, with the fresh and original spiritual life of the apostolic Church, the entire special circumstances of the emer-

gency (ver. 29, ἀπειλάς, παῤῥησίαν, ἴασιν, etc.) are in favour of the first production of the prayer at this time. If one of the apostles had spoken the prayer, and the others present had joined in part of it with a loud voice (as in the words of the psalm), this would correspond with all that is expressed by the words of Luke, especially as he frequently puts an expression into the mouth of many, which yet could only have been suitably spoken by one: for example, chap. iv. 19, v. 29, etc.

3. *Lord, Thou hast made.* — This is the first Christian Church prayer that we know. It merits careful consideration. 1. It was caused by trouble and danger: this "beautiful flower grew at the cross." 2. The petition arising from trouble, in which the chief part of the prayer consists, implores God to behold the threatenings of their enemies (that their counsel and will might not be accomplished), and to give His gracious assistance to His servants in word and in deed (that His kingdom may come). 3. Their support in trouble is first the omnipotence of God, as the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth; and secondly, the comforting word and promises of God (the second Psalm is here given entirely according to the text of the Septuagint), the fulfilment of which was already apparent in the sufferings and resurrection of Christ.

4. *By the mouth of David.*—The second Psalm, which, as is well known, has no superscription, is here, according to the ordinary supposition, ascribed to David as its author; and what he says of the raging of the heathen (φρυάσσω, properly the wild snorting of a spirited and unmanageable horse) is referred to the enmity of the heathen Romans, whilst ἄρχοντες is applied to Pontius Pilate, λαοί to Israel, and βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς to Herod.

5. *Behold their threatenings.*—With ἔπιδε ἐπὶ τὰς ἀπειλὰς αὐτῶν the prayer returns to the danger of the moment and the need of the present. The threat of the Sanhedrim was the sword hanging over their heads. What they here request is "God's beholding," His watching providence, restraining their enemies and protecting His children. This is, so to speak, the negative part of the petition. The positive part is, that God would grant unto His servants boldness and joyfulness to proclaim His word, and that He would cause deeds of healing, signs and wonders, to be done in the name of Jesus. This is closely

connected with the last event, the cure of the lame man, and the impression which it made, as well as with the most pressing necessity of the immediate future. Thus do the worshippers recognise the free, courageous, and joyful publication of the word, and the accompanying testimony of the miracle, healing, helping, and saving through the power of God.

6. *The place shook.*—The shaking of the place where the Church was assembled, and their being filled with the Holy Ghost, so that they spoke the word of God with joyfulness, was a direct reply to their prayer, an evident yea and amen to their petition. The context leads us to think, not of a purely natural and merely fortuitous occurrence (Heinrichs and Kuinoel), but of a miraculous and designed act of God. Bengel understands the shaking of the place, as a symbol of the approaching agitation which would penetrate everywhere through the Gospel: Baumgarten understands it, as a sign that the will of God has power over the continuance of visible things. It may be considered chiefly as a sign of the omnipotence of God, to which the suppliants betook themselves and on which they relied, and likewise as an accompanying external sign of the internal and invisible operations of the Spirit. What the believers had implored for the future and for the appearance of the apostles before unbelievers and enemies, God, who does above all that we can ask or think, fulfilled instantly, and even for their mutual intercourse with each other, as a guarantee and pledge of that which He would still further do. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with joyfulness."

7. *And the multitude of believers.*—The first blow of the enemies from without against the Church of Christ, happily averted by the protection and grace of God, forms an epoch: there takes place a preliminary pause. And here Luke stops to describe the condition of the collective Church, as it was at that time. This description consists in four particulars. 1. The apostles bare witness of the resurrection of Jesus with great power: an evidence of God's continuing to hear the above petition (ver. 29). Very far from being intimidated by the threats of the authorities, the apostles bore witness of Jesus and His resurrection openly, and with yet greater courage and power. 2. Great grace was upon them all; not only upon the apostles,

but upon believers collectively. *Χάρις* means here not favour with the people (Olshausen and others), of which there is no trace, but the divine favour and satisfaction, for the sake of Christ, which extended itself upon all (*ἐπὶ πάντας*). 3. Unity of heart among Christians, brotherly love, and perfect harmony in thought and feeling (*ἡ καρδία καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ μία*), which was the more difficult, the greater the number of the disciples (*πλῆθος τῶν πιστευσάντων*).

8. *And they had all things common.*—Community of goods is mentioned as the fourth particular (see Acts ii. 44). This circumstance is here conceived, partly as an expression of brotherly unity, and partly as a proof of the grace of God. Luke does not here represent the matter as a legal and enjoined rule, but as the free action of individuals, of which also the instance of Joseph Barnabas, specially mentioned, is a proof. Nor does the language of Luke support the notion that this community of goods is to be considered as a universal custom without exception, so that every one (not constrained indeed by command, but voluntarily) disposed of his entire possessions, and offered them up to the disposal of the Church. If, according to ver. 32, none of them said that ought of what he possessed was his own (*ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι*), yet this directly supposes the possession of his own as existing: hoc ipso præsupponitur, proprietatem possessionis non plane fuisse deletam (Bengel). Every one held that which he had, not in selfishness for his own (of which no one was to enjoy anything), but they had *πάντα κοινά*,—everything was at the service of all in common. In the further delineation (ver. 34), the chief point consists evidently in the care for the needy, which is described as a comprehensive and perfectly successful care. "No one lacked." "Distribution was made to every man according as he had need." This was made possible, because all the members of the Church (*ὅσοι*), who were possessors of houses or lands, sold their possessions, and laid the prices of the things that were sold at the apostles' feet, that is, placed them at their disposal. The words here do certainly seem to import, that all the possessors of land in the Church sold something, but not that they disposed of their entire possessions: all sold something, but all sold not everything: it is not even expressly mentioned that any one disposed of all that he had. Thus the universality of the (voluntary)

custom of relinquishing all their possessions for the good of the poor of the Church, is not derived from this passage. Indeed, the single instance, which is immediately brought forward, speaks rather to the contrary.

9. *Joseph*, or Joses, to whom the apostles gave the surname בַּר נְבוּאָה, that is, the son of prophetic admonition or exhortation, a native of the island of Cyprus, of the tribe of Levi, sold a field which he possessed, and laid the money at the apostles' feet. This is the well-known Barnabas, afterwards the companion of St Paul. It is worthy of remark that he was of the tribe of Levi; and we soon also hear that many of the priests became believers. The name Barnabas, given by the apostles (similarly as Jesus Himself gave the names Peter and Boanerges), was undoubtedly founded on the extraordinary spiritual gift of inspired and effective discourse and exhortation by which he was distinguished. That he possessed a field was not illegal (Baumgarten): Jeremiah, in all the forms, concluded a sale of land before witnesses (Jer. xxxii. 7). It was not to satisfy the law, but purely out of love to the brethren, that Barnabas sold the field.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The worshippers relied upon the omnipotence of God, who made heaven and earth. One of the most trivial articles of faith, as many think; and yet an original and fundamental truth of revelation, from which faith draws strength and consolation. The last book of Scripture, the Apocalypse, returns to this truth of the first book of the Bible with peculiar energy. As truth is one, and one member of it is dependent upon another, so no article of faith can be lightly esteemed without all others suffering.

2. The second Psalm is the biblical ground on which the prayer rests, and that in virtue of the divine inspiration from which this psalm proceeded. This is also established by its fulfilment in Jesus Christ. For David is here evidently the type of Jesus: as David was a servant of God, so is Jesus the servant of God in the full sense (*παῖς*, vers. 25, 27, 30); as David was the anointed of God, so is Jesus the anointed of God; as David experienced conspiracy and opposition against his kingly power and government, so did Jesus; but *then* God protected

and justified His anointed, and *now* He will also watch over and bestow the victory, for a greater than David is here.

3. Wherein, according to this, consists the confession of the Church concerning Jesus Christ? He is represented as ὁ ἅγιος παῖς Θεοῦ, that is, the servant of God in an exclusive sense. On the one hand, Jesus is placed on the same footing with David, inasmuch as he is also a παῖς Θεοῦ. But, on the other hand, something incomparably higher is ascribed to Jesus, not only in being called the servant of God, whereas David was only a servant of God; but chiefly because Jesus in this prayer is constantly called ὁ ἅγιος παῖς Θεοῦ, that is to say, separated from everything sinful and impure, and on this account infinitely exalted above David, serving only God and His kingdom, the consecrated servant and fulfiller of the divine counsels. Herein consists a close and, in its kind, a peculiar fellowship with God. And this is accordingly acknowledged by God in permitting miracles to be done by the name of Jesus, that is, by Jesus when recognised, confessed, and invoked. He is consequently the Mediator of salvation, and of the miraculous works of God.

4. There is in this prayer the genuine and pure disposition of Christ. Nothing of revenge or carnal zeal, nothing about the destruction of their enemies, but only, with all zeal for the cause of God, supplication that God might behold the threatenings of their enemies, and bestow His grace for a joyful witness in word and deed. Even as Christ came not to judge the world, but to save it, so also the apostles and believers are not inflamed with the judicial fiery zeal of Elias, but with warm love to souls, who are to be rescued by their words and deeds, and brought to salvation in Christ. And wherever the word of God is not bound, wherever the word of the Saviour is administered with power and boldness, there also is the cause of Christ certain of victory.

5. *The prayer and its answer.*—It was a prayer in the name of Jesus, in His fellowship, in His mind and spirit; and to it, indeed, an answer is promised unconditionally. Therefore it was heard, heard immediately, heard beyond all that they asked or thought. Prayer elevates, and strengthens, and sanctifies the soul. Without prayer, this filling with the Holy Ghost would not have occurred.

6. This glorious unity in spirit, not only unity of the true faith, but also of brotherly love, is an evidence of real regenera-

tion and a genuine state of grace. A unity which, with entire denial of self and of the world, looks not at its own things, but on the things of others. One feels the necessities of another, bears the burden of another, holds his own as common, and thus fulfils the law of Christ. And because faith proves itself genuine and living by love, grace also is in all and upon all.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

They came to their own (ver. 23). It is useful to inform believers of the danger of the Church, that they may sigh to God on account of it, and contend in prayer (Quesnel).—It is a great advantage for a faithful teacher, if God has given him a little company, whom he can regard as "his own," namely, as partakers with him in the same grace, and united in one mind. Such a little company of believers is a refuge, where he can have refreshment and encouragement under trouble (Apost. Past.).

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord (ver. 24). The best defence and weapons of the Church in trouble and persecution, are prayer and tears.—If the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, much more will the prayers of many righteous men, who pray with one accord (Starke).—The mouths of the faithful witnesses of Jesus are never stopped; either they preach to the world or they cry to God (Apost. Past.).—As trouble teaches individuals to pray, so does it the Church.—The fellowship of believers on earth is a fellowship of faith, of the cross, and of prayer.

Why rage the heathen? (ver. 25). When the enemies of the Church rage, we ought not to rage again, but to be calm, and to praise God in faith, suffering, and prayer (Starke).—*The beautiful burnt-offering of a true Church-prayer.* 1. The altar on which it must be placed: the fellowship of believers. 2. The fire in which it should burn: the glow of brotherly love. 3. The wind which must blow on it: the storm of persecution. 4. The wood with which it should be fed: the divine promises taken from the ever-green forest of Scripture. 5. The God to whom it ascends: the almighty Creator and Lord of heaven and earth. 6. The amen which falls to its lot: renewal and strengthening of the Holy Ghost.—*How a Christian ought to pray with reference to his enemies.* 1. Without anxiety and fear; for he prays

to the King of kings. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" 2. Without hatred and malice; for he prays against wickedness, but not against the wicked. 3. Without pride and scorn; for he prays not for himself, but for the cause of the Lord.

And when they had prayed, the place shook (ver. 31). Prayer effects miracles. 1. Internal: hearts are savingly affected, spirits are mightily strengthened. 2. External: houses are moved, churches awakened, enemies frightened, mountains displaced, and the world convulsed.

The multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul (ver. 32). Believers ought not only to be of one heart (united in will), but of one soul (united in understanding and knowledge), (Apost. Past.).—Suffering unites pious hearts, and sets at variance the wicked.—"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Ps. cxxxiii.—Here the bride of Christ appears in her beautiful garments: in the ornaments of holiness, cheerful faith, and unity of spirit (Starke).—In truth, a paradise on earth; but, alas, how soon has it vanished! Heb. xiii. 1; Rev. ii. 4 (Quesnel).—*Neither said any that ought of the things which he possessed was his own.* The noble communism of the first Christians, and the wicked communism of modern communists. Those said, What is mine, is thine; these, What is thine, is mine. (See Homiletical Hints to chap. ii. 44, 45.) The true opposition to godless communism and equality consists in the use of the sacred communion and in Christian fellowship, which forms itself always and everywhere according to the indwelling and royal law of love (Besser).

And with great power (ver. 33). The more the divine truth is oppressed, the stronger it mounts upwards (Starke).—*Neither was there any among them that lacked* (ver. 34). The cause was to be found in part, indeed, in the community of goods, but it chiefly consisted in this, that the grace of the Lord Jesus had made their hearts contented, moderate, and orderly (Apost. Past.).—*For as many as possessed lands or houses sold them.* We cannot better show our gratitude to Jesus, who for our sakes became poor, than when we make ourselves poor for the sake of His poor members (Quesnel).—Whoever offers himself to the Lord, is also able to offer his goods to the brethren.—The wise providence of God sought thus to make the approaching flight

out of Jerusalem bearable to the Christians, by obliging them to rid themselves, in time, of the possession of real property, and to betake themselves to the condition of pilgrims who possess their own no more (Apost. Past.).—The community of goods among the first Christians: wherein it can and ought to be an example to modern Christianity: wherein not.—*The true blossoms of a Christian congregation.* 1. Where the preaching of Christ flourishes, there true faith flourishes. 2. Where true faith flourishes, there genuine love flourishes: "One heart and one soul." 3. Where genuine love flourishes, there true prosperity flourishes: "No one lacked."—The storms of persecution are to the Church what thunder-storms are to the land: everything after them grows green and flourishes, increases and shoots forth the fairer.

And Joseph, who by the apostles was named Barnabas (vers. 36, 37).—*How every Christian is to become a Barnabas, that is, a son of consolation.* 1. By deriving in faith true consolation from the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. 2. By willingly dispensing comfort in love: (*a*) With the mouth, by friendly exhortation, which, without doubt, was the peculiar gift of Barnabas, and acquired for him this honourable name: see Isa. xli. 1, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people;" Isa. lii. 7, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet," etc.; (*b*) with the hand, by brotherly gifts of love, even as Barnabas presented them: "Let us not love in word and tongue merely, but in deed and in truth," 1 John iii. 18.

The brotherly fellowship of the first Christians. 1. The brotherly prayer of faith (vers. 23–31). 2. The brotherly assistance of love (vers. 31–37).

SECTION II.

AN INTERNAL DANGER AVERTED BY THE MIRACULOUS AND SUDDEN JUDGMENT ON THE SIN OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA: THE EFFECT OF THIS EVENT; AND THE INTERNAL PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH BY THE VERIFICATION OF THE MIRACULOUS POWERS OF THE APOSTLES. (CHAP. V. 1–16.)

A.

The Internal Danger, and the averting of it by the Judgment on the Sin of Ananias and Sapphira.

CHAP. V. 1–11.

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold an estate, 2 And purloined part of the price, with the knowledge of his wife, and brought a part of it, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said: Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to purloin part of the price of the possession? 4 When it remained, was it not thine own? and when it was sold, it was also in thy power. Wherefore hast thou then resolved such a thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost: and there came a great fear upon all who heard it. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it came to pass, after the lapse of about three hours, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 But Peter answered unto her, Tell me, have ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yes, for so much. 9 Then Peter said to her, Wherefore have ye agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and will carry thee out. 10 Then she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: then the young men came in, and finding her dead, they carried her out, and buried her beside her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon all who heard these things.

Ver. 2. One of the principal MSS., E., has *αὐτοῦ* after *τῆς γυναικός*, which also the textus receptus retains; but it is an addition, perhaps repeated from ver. 1, which verse the same MS. commences with the following addition: *ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ τῷ καιρῷ ἀνήρ τις.*

Ver. 5. *Ταῦτα* after *ἀκούοντας* is certainly an addition of the same MS. (E.), taken, doubtless, from ver. 11.

Ver. 9. *Εἶπε* is awanting in the Alex. Cod., and occupies another place in the MS. of St Germain (E.), and is by Origen replaced with *φησίν*. It was, without doubt, originally not in the text, as many MSS. testify.

10. *Πρὸς τοὺς πόδας*: others *παρὰ*, *ἐπὶ*, *ὑπό*: *πρὸς* is best attested.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But a certain man.*—The history of Ananias and Sapphira

forms, first of all, a contrast to the act of Barnabas, and to the example of many others, who had brought the price of their disposed lands undiminished to the apostles. This is no indication of internal pragmatism, but entirely corresponds to the simple and artless character of the entire style of the history.

2. *Sold an estate.*—The objective in the action is very simple. Ananias, in concert with his wife, sold an estate which belonged to him; and indeed one, not all. Luther's translation is misleading—"Ananias sold his possessions:" the original says only, ἐπώλησε κτῆμα, and in ver. 3 Peter expressly mentions το χωρίον, the single and known piece of ground, about whose price the question is. Now the man acts thus: he keeps back part of the price which was paid to him, in order to retain it to himself; the other part he brings and lays at the apostles' feet, for an offering, as others had already done. How he divided the money, whether he kept back only a small portion, or, as is more probable, a considerable part, is not indicated, nor is morally of any definite importance. That the man acted with the knowledge of his wife, that both were perfectly at one, ver. 2 not only informs us, but is directly evident from ver. 8.

3. The internal form of the transaction is more complicated. There is nothing to prevent us supposing, that satisfaction in the example of others, namely, in the unselfish and liberal sacrifices of their goods and possessions for the brethren, may have concurred, perhaps have been the original motive. But after the sale of the land and the receipt of the money in hand, covetousness was excited. The heart did not cleave to the land, but it adhered to the money so tenaciously, that it could not tear itself completely away from it, and hence kept back a part of the price. But as the married pair were unwilling to confess this openly, they gave out that the sum brought was the whole price, in order to have the appearance of self-denying love and liberality before the apostles and the whole Church. This was abominable hypocrisy; and for this purpose, also, they must commit a deliberate falsehood, and that not only unto men, but unto God. To affirm that the whole price belonged to the Church and the poor, and yet to keep back a part of it, was also an embezzlement, and in a manner a theft. There was in this not only individual sin, but also a serious danger for the whole

Church; for if such hypocrisy gained ground, if purity and truth vanished, the Church of Christ would be deprived of its best ornaments, and pharisaical hypocrisy would step into the place of holiness.

4. *Wherefore has Satan.*—The sin was checked, partly by the manifestation of what was secret, and partly by instantaneous punishment. The former resulted from human instrumentality, but not without divine illumination: the latter, directly from divine interposition. It was Peter who without reserve revealed to Ananias, and (because it happened in an assembly of the Church) also to the Church, the falsehood and abominable wickedness of his heart, and the greatness of his guilt; as also he afterwards did to his wife. He severely reproves Ananias, because he had permitted Satan fully to take possession of his heart, so that he had sought to deceive the Holy Ghost. His lie was directed not against man, but against God: and his sin was so much the more aggravated, because he was at perfect liberty to keep the field to himself, or to dispose of the price according to his pleasure. Peter also reproaches Sapphira, because she along with her husband, and indeed by a doubly reprehensible agreement (*συνεφωνήθη*), had tempted the Spirit of the Lord: *ψεύσασθαί σε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, οὐκ ἐψεύσω ἀνθρώποις*, etc. The variety in the construction gives a variety in the meaning: *ψεύδεσθαι* constructed with the accusative is to deceive one by a lie; *ψεύδεσθαι τινί* is to commit a lie in reference to one. If it were only said that Peter had discovered the deceit, still one might reasonably ask whether the knowledge of it had come to him in a natural manner. But the apostle does not only disclose the external deed, but also the secret internal motive, the concealed condition of soul, the disposition and state of the heart (ver. 3, *τὴν καρδίαν σου*: ver. 4, *ἔθου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου*); and this it is impossible to explain otherwise than by the illumination of God through the Holy Ghost.

5. *He fell down.*—The punishment itself—that Ananias fell down dead on the spot, at the words of the apostle, is to be regarded as a direct divine act. For that the sudden death of the husband, and in the same manner afterwards of the wife, had been caused merely by a fit of apoplexy, brought on by terror (Heinrichs and others), does not in the slightest degree agree with the whole spirit of the narrative. But, on the other

hand, there is no good ground in the narrative to suppose (with Meyer and some of the ancients) that Peter intended the sudden death of the two, and directly effected it by means of the miraculous power residing in him. With regard to Ananias, no trace of this can be discovered, either in the words of the apostle or in the narrative of Luke. And even the declaration of Peter to Sapphira (ver. 9),—which Meyer thinks, that without the apostle's consciousness of his will being here the active element, would have been presumption,—is yet nothing else than a prediction of the impending death of the wife, prompted not only by the fate of the husband, but also, and chiefly, by the illumination of the Spirit. God, and not the apostle, is the agent. The event is to be considered as a direct divine interposition, in the way of most swift and terrible punishment. But still we are not excluded, either by the original text or by the contents, from taking into account both the psychological effect of the word of Peter, revealing publicly the inmost secret of their wickedness, and the moral susceptibility of the two sinners. For with regard to their moral susceptibility, the account does at least suppose that they put an uncommon weight on the judgment of the apostle, and on the public opinion of the Church; and, accordingly, a discovery so unexpected and so complete, and a public reproof, might have made a most terrible impression upon them. To recognise this is by no means "to mingle and halve the divine and the natural" (Meyer).

6. *Then rose up the young men.*—The historian calls those persons, who forthwith stretched the lifeless body (*συνέστειλαν*), then carried it out, and buried it in one of the burying-places outside the city (as afterwards they did the same to the wife), *οἱ νεώτεροι*, ver. 6, *οἱ νεανίσκοι*, ver. 10.—It is the common opinion, that these were the stated servants of the Church who by means of their office were accustomed to such business (Mosheim, Olshausen, Meyer). But the reasons for this opinion are not strong; on the contrary, it is very doubtful if at that time, besides the apostleship, there was any recognised office in the Church. It consisted entirely with the nature of the case, that the youngest men, especially if the least hint were given them, would freely devote themselves to such services.

7. Because Sapphira came in about three hours afterwards, Baumgarten thinks that it was a second assembly of the Church,

corresponding to the Jewish hours of prayer, divided by an interval of three hours. On the other hand, ver. 7 seems rather to convey the idea that the meeting of the Church continued, and that the wife came about three hours later into the same assembly. When Peter inquires, Have ye given the land for this price? it is very probable that τοσούτου referred to the money still lying there, not to the express naming of the amount.

8. *And great fear came upon all.*—On both occasions, at the death of Ananias and at the death of Sapphira, Luke mentions the impression which the event made. The only distinction is, that in ver. 5 the impression on the hearers (τοὺς ἀκούοντας without ταῦτα, which is critically doubtful), who were collected to listen to the instructions of the apostles, is mentioned; whilst ver. 11 treats partly of the Church and partly of all outside of it, who received information of the occurrence. It is worthy of remark that here (ver. 11) the idea ἐκκλησία occurs for the first time in the Acts of the Apostles. Hitherto Luke has spoken of οἱ μαθηταί, chap. i. 15, πάντες οἱ πιστεύοντες, chap. ii. 44, τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πιστευσάντων, chap. iv. 32. In distinction from these modes of expression, which have their origin entirely in individuals, Luke here names ὅλη ἡ ἐκκλησία as a collection, a collective personality. It is not to be considered as accidental, that this collective idea of the Church, as a self-contained whole, is first brought forward in connection with that event which appears as an imposing act of "divine church discipline" (Thiersch).

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The question of Peter, Why hath Satan filled thine heart? contains more than one truth with reference to Satan.—First of all, the existence and reality of Satan, that is to say, of the evil spirit who is the prince of darkness, is throughout undeniably to be understood. It cannot here be considered as a mere allegory; the matter was too serious, and the speech of the apostle is much too impressive, severe, and direct for that.—Again, there is here a proof that evil does not exist and grow isolated in the human breast, but is connectively interwoven with the kingdom of evil in the invisible world. And precisely the worst sins, the subtlest hypocrisy, where evil clothes itself in the holiest garments

of light, are the operations of Satan.—Further, the vehement and strong expression of the Apostle Peter supposes that there exist different degrees of the influence and working of Satan, from the smallest temptation to the filling of the heart, that is, entirely and completely taking possession of it, which is the terrible contrast to *πλησθῆναι πνεύματος ἁγίου*.—And lastly, the freedom of the will and the responsibility of man, even in relation to the powerful promptings of the devil, are in these words of Peter indirectly, but yet unmistakeably, expressed. For, Peter says to Ananias not only: Satan has filled thy heart, that thou hast done this: but he asks, Why? And the reason which he seeks lies evidently not in Satan, but in Ananias. The question has undeniably this meaning: Why hast thou permitted it? Why hast thou consented that Satan should fill thy heart?—The apostle indirectly testifies that man, if he will, may resist the devil, 1 Pet. v. 9; Jas. iv. 7: that man is responsible, and to blame, if he give himself up to satanic influence; that there is no irresistible power of Satan.

2. What Peter says is important with reference to the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. He refers the action of Ananias and Sapphira wholly to the Holy Ghost. He judges the deed, not from the stand-point of the apostles as individual men, or of the Church as a human fellowship; but as the disposition and action appeared to the Spirit of the Lord. Their sin is a sin against the Holy Ghost,—a *crimen læsæ majestatis* against Him. And accordingly, from the nature of the case, as well as from the words, both the personality and the divinity of the Holy Ghost are testified. When Peter says, "Satan has filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost;" "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God;" "Ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord;" the explanation that here the Holy Ghost denotes only a power or an operation of God, does not agree with the whole solemnity of the rebuke (Strauss). On the contrary, the Holy Ghost is here supposed to be a Person in reference to whom we may act in such and such a manner, whom we may *πειράσαι*, that is, put to the proof, whom we may seek to deceive by falsehood.—Further, the divinity of the Holy Ghost is testified when Peter says, *οὐκ ἐψεύσω ἀνθρώποις ἀλλὰ τῷ Θεῷ* (ver. 4). Meyer, indeed, thinks that it is a lie against God, because His Spirit was lied to: that is to say, by *Θεῷ* he would understand, not the Holy

Ghost Himself, but God the Father. But the sin of Ananias, that he sought to lie to the Holy Ghost and that he lied to God, is one and the same deed. And even if we grant the above distinction, yet from the context the circumstance remains as the chief thing, as the strongest reproach in the apostolic word, that the married couple offended the Holy Ghost, and thus committed a great and an unpardonable sin. The greatness of the guilt is founded on the majesty and inviolable holiness of the Spirit, as a divine Person.

3. *The indwelling of the Holy Ghost.*—Ananias persuaded himself that it was nothing very wicked, when he uttered an untruth, if it were only men who were deceived by it. But, Peter says to him, Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God: because the Holy Ghost dwells within these men. And whilst Ananias sought to corrupt and to lead into error the Christian conscience of others—their judgment in divine things, his outrage was directed against the Holy Ghost, who is the cause of all truth which is in the convictions, and of all holiness which is in the disposition, and who governs the judgment of believers in divine things.—But who are the persons in whom the Holy Ghost was insulted? This reference is commonly limited to the apostles. But for this there exists no reason in the text. It is true Ananias laid his money down at the apostles' feet; but in doing so he had regard, not only to the apostles, but to the whole Church,—to their opinion and judgment. And the Holy Ghost was, according to the former part of the history, not only in the apostles, but in all believers. (See Baumgarten, English trans., p. 113.)

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Barnabas and Ananias (ver. 1). Two people can do the same thing; but before God it is not the same thing. Cain and Abel both brought their offerings to the Lord. Ananias and Barnabas both sold their fields for the good of the poor.—*Ananias in the pentecostal Church.* Where there is much light, there is also much shadow. Where God has a church, the devil builds a chapel beside it. Where the husbandman sows his corn, the enemy is after him with his tares.—Jesus had a traitor among His apostles; the primitive Church had a hypocrite in its bosom: this is the form of the visible Church in all

ages (Starke).—Because good and evil are in the external Church, God has made good and evil examples to be recorded; the former for our edification, and the latter for our warning (Quesnel).—"Remember Lot's wife," says our Saviour, after so long a time; and this holds good of all such pillars of salt set up for our warning (Rieger).

And kept back part of the price (ver. 2). Avarice is a root of all evil: witness Judas and Ananias.—*And brought a part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.* God will have no sacrifice of that which avarice and hypocrisy leave over: He will have what is entire, Mal. i. 12 (Quesnel).—Probably Ananias and Sapphira were impelled to the sale more from shame, and from the example of others, than induced to do so with perfect willingness of mind (Rieger).—Those are unfortunate people who endow a charitable institution, in order that they may obtain a great name from the world (Starke).

But Peter said, Ananias (ver. 3). A teacher dare not remain indifferent to the sins of his flock: what obliges him to testify against them are: 1. Love to the Lord, and zeal for His house; 2. Anxiety for the poor erring souls; 3. Care for others who might thereby be offended and infected (Apost. Past.).—*Why hath Satan filled thine heart?* A terrifying warning: 1. Of the power of Satan not only to seize upon, but to fill human hearts, and even Christian hearts; 2. Of the guilt and responsibility of him who is thus led astray: Why has he filled thine heart? How can the devil lead astray him who suffers himself to be led by Christ? (Apost. Past.).—A man who deliberately lies and deceives his neighbour, has given his heart into the power of Satan, John viii. 44 (Starke).—*And to keep back part of the price.* It is sacrilege, when one takes from God that which he has already in intention devoted and given to Him (Quesnel).

Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? (ver. 4). God desires not our goods, but our heart (Quesnel).—*Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?* It is a good sign, when souls, who are powerfully impressed by the word of the Lord, feel as if all their hidden sins and abominations were related to them, as if he who preaches the word of the Lord knows of them, although he may never have seen or heard of their persons before. This shows the power of the divine word, that it is a

discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Apost. Past.).—It is to be presumed that if Ananias, or even afterwards Sapphira, could have been able to bring forth from the recesses of their hearts any desire, however feeble, for the truth, and had thus been able to give an answer to the "wherefore" of the apostle, the punishment of death would have been averted (Rieger).—*Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, when He speaks inwardly in your heart, or outwardly in His word; for, 1. You insult thereby the holy majesty of God; 2. You ruin thereby your own spirit, and with it both soul and body.

He fell down and gave up the ghost (ver. 5). "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." He has not ceased in the New Covenant to be a great and zealous God.—The truth, that the Holy Ghost is truly God, 1. terribly proved by the death of Ananias, who grieved Him; and 2. blessedly proved by the life of those who obey Him (Apost. Past.).

They buried him (ver. 6). It is not contrary to the divine justice that we should pay the last offices to those whom it punishes, 1 Kings xiii. 26, 29 (Starke).—But to be honourably buried, is not on that account to have died happily.

After the lapse of about three hours his wife came in (ver. 7). She had three hours to reflect. God, according to His long-suffering and goodness, gives longer time to one sinner to reflect and to repent than to another (Starke).—*Not knowing what was done:* but she knew well what God has threatened to hypocrites and the unrighteous in the Holy Scriptures. They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them (Apost. Past.).

Tell me, Whether ye sold the land for so much? (ver. 8). The woman had not only longer time for consideration, but Peter, by a yet more pointed question, gave her a much better opportunity for reflection, and for giving glory to God. But as she answered still more shamelessly, she is obliged to listen more fully to her sentence, and to hear what had already happened to her husband (Rieger).

How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? (ver. 9). It is a great perversion of the marriage state when the two are joined to do evil (Starke).—The fearful perversion of the marriage bond in many a family, where marriage is nothing more than, 1. a fellowship of goods and a business trans-

action to become rich, instead of a union of hearts in the Lord; or, 2. a union to the service of the flesh, the world, and the devil, instead of a pious resolution, I and my house will serve the Lord; and 3. a walking together to hell, it may be to a hell on earth (a state of marriage, a state of woe), or to eternal perdition, instead of the married pair being helpers of one another's joys and blessedness, and striving how the one might bring the other to heaven.—How is it that ye have agreed together? a serious question to every Christian married pair.

Then fell she down immediately at his feet and gave up the ghost (ver. 10). God is not a God who has pleasure in wickedness. He who is evil dwells not before Him: He destroys them that lie, Ps. v. 6, 7. Here these two persons fall down suddenly dead at the word of a mortal man: how then will sinners for an instant endure the punishments of the truth on the great day! 2 Thess. i. 8–10 (Starke).—The great day will declare whether with Ananias and Sapphira, it was only a destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved on the day of the Lord Jesus (Rieger).

And great fear came upon all the Church (ver. 11). The Church is not designed to cherish sins, or to procure for sinners security from punishment (Quesnel).—To excite a holy fear is the end of the divine judgments, but how often do they serve people either for idle astonishment, or frivolous conversation, or make them self-righteous judges!—When the Lord purges His floor and scatters the chaff, His true kingdom suffers no diminution thereby, for true believers are thus kept and preserved (Apost. Past.).

The sin of Ananias and Sapphira, according to the standard of the world venial, but, in the light of God's countenance, great and aggravated; for, 1. It is theft, springing from avarice, the root of all evil. 2. It is falsehood and hypocrisy, an abomination in the sight of the true God. 3. It takes place deliberately and wilfully (ver. 4, Was it not in thine own power?). 4. It takes place in a plot by concert of the married pair, who were united to evil, instead of the one sharpening the conscience of the other: How can I do this great wickedness? (ver. 9, How is it that ye have agreed together?). 5. It grieves the Holy Spirit of God, who not only by the mouth of Peter, but in their own

hearts, as believing members of the Church, must have warned, reproved, and exhorted them. 6. It offends the Church, which should have neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, and which even at this time flourished so beautifully in the Holy Ghost: "Woe to him by whom the offence cometh." 7. It gives occasion to make the name of Jesus blasphemed among the Gentiles.—*The first tare among the wheat.* 1. How the wicked one sows it. 2. How the Lord of the field plucks it out.—*The punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, an illustrious example of the divine justice.* 1. In its citation: it knows no respect of persons, but calls believers as well as unbelievers before its bar, yea, it steps even more quickly among the former, as the servants who knew the Lord's will: judgment must begin at the house of God. 2. In its examination: it inquires inexorably, and uncovers the most secret recesses of the heart. 3. In its punishments: it rather cuts off, without false tenderness, a diseased member from the body of the Church, than that the whole body perish; and rather chastises the flesh in time, that the spirit, if possible, may be saved for eternal life.—*The first act of church discipline carried into effect by the Lord of the Church.* 1. Occasion and object of discipline: the scandal in the Church. 2. Means and instrument of discipline: the reproving word in the mouth of the spiritual office. 3. End and design of discipline: the glory of God, the purity of the Church, and wholesome fear in the conscience. (But for practical application, the difference of the times must be kept in view.)—*The act of divine church discipline on Ananias and Sapphira, a cause of deep shame for our lax Church.* 1. In respect of its object: then one scandal in the Church; now hundreds and thonsands which none can overtake. 2. In respect of its instrument: then a valiant and inspired apostle; now mostly weak office-bearers and servants of the Church, forsaken either by the Spirit of the Lord, or by the aid of the Church. 3. In respect of its consequence: then pious fear and wholesome dread; now mockery and laughter.

B.

Progress of the Church by the Verification of the Miraculous Powers of the Apostles in the Healing of the Sick.

Chap. v. 12–16.

12 But by the hands of the apostles were many signs and miracles done among the people; and they were all together, with one accord, in Solomon's porch. 13 But of the rest durst no one join himself to them; but the people esteemed them highly. 14 And believers in the Lord were the more added, a multitude of men and women. 15 So that they brought out the sick to the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter passed, his shadow might perhaps overshadow some of them. 16 There came together also a multitude from the neighbouring cities to Jerusalem, and brought the sick, and those who were afflicted with unclean spirits; and they were all healed.

Ver. 15. Κατὰ τὰς πλατείας. The readings are here very various: ἐν ταῖς πλ., εἰς τὰς πλ., are purely corrections for the sake of simplicity.—Κλιναρίων: instead of this, some have the simple and more familiar κλινῶν.

Ver. 16. Εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ: εἰς was left out partly because the name of the city was supposed to explain πέριξ; it is however to be retained.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. As after the miracle of Pentecost (chap. ii. 43), and after the first attack which the apostles suffered (chap. iv. 32), so here also, after this divine judgment guarding the holiness of the Church, there follows a narrative comprehending a quiet progress for a space of time. This besides has in view, not (as in chap. iv. 32) the inner life of the Church, but rather the consideration in which it and the apostles were held by the world.

2. This narrative is not logically and systematically arranged. Hence by severe critics, as Beck and Ziegler, nearly the whole episode has been suspected to be an interpolation. But it is only the same simple and artless style of narrative that elsewhere characterises this book.

3. *By the hands of the apostles.*—Luke mentions, first of all, numerous miracles, that is miracles of healing, which were done by the apostles among the people: thus miracles of kindness in contrast to the late miraculous judgment of God. That took place within the Church: the miracles of healing, on the contrary, benefited those who had not yet become believers. Vers. 15 and 16 mention them in detail. They carried out the sick along

the streets (*κατὰ τὰς πλατ.*) and put them on couches and beds, in order that they might be healed by Peter, if only his shadow fell upon one of them. It is however carefully to be observed, that Luke mentions this opinion only as a view of the people: that they had such confidence in Peter that they ascribed a healing efficacy even to his shadow. It is not expressly said that the healing took place by the bare shadow of the apostle. Only this is testified (especially at the close of ver. 16), that many miracles of healing were done by Peter; but in what manner is not said. The *διὰ τῶν χειρῶν τ. ἀπ.* is not simply = *διὰ*, but supposes that in general those miracles of healing took place by the laying on of the hand or by touch. It is however possible that here and there, without actual touch, some sick, with whom faith as a condition of susceptibility existed, may have been healed. Such faith and confidence in the healing powers of the apostles spread from the city to the neighbourhood, so that out of the neighbouring cities many people came to Jerusalem with their sick and demoniacs, and found also the wished-for healing.

4. *And they were all together with one accord.*—It is further related that the believers held themselves together with one accord, and that in Solomon's porch (Acts iii. 11) in the temple which, on account of its capaciousness, was peculiarly fitted for the assembling of a congregation, already so considerable, and always increasing. But the greater the number, so much the more easily might others come into the assembly and disturb it, and thus injure the harmony and full confidence of being together. Yet this did not happen, and that because the feeling of respect and esteem toward believers prevailed among the people; on which account those, who had not attached themselves to the Church, kept at a respectful distance from its assemblies. The interpretation of Baur, who limits *αὐτοί* to the apostles, and refers *οἱ λοιποί* to the Christians themselves, as if even the members of the Church kept themselves from a motive of respect at a distance from the apostles, does not at all agree with the picture of Church life which the Acts of the Apostles sketches. On the contrary, a multitude of people of both sexes united themselves to the Church on the ground of faith in Jesus; and it was this steady growth of the Church which caused increased confidence, among the people, in the miraculous powers of the apostles.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The miraculous punishment had done its work, both in the Church itself, and on those without. The Church was thus earnestly admonished to self-watchfulness, and warned not to grieve the Holy Ghost. And the people received the conviction that a man must, with his whole soul and conscience, submit himself wholly to the rule of the Holy Ghost, if he would join the Church: that a mere external fellowship, for appearance sake, avails nothing. Not a great and mixed multitude, but the holiness of His people, is pleasing to the Lord of the Church.

2. That the apostles now performed such numerous miracles, was an answer to their prayer (Acts iv. 30), and was likewise a proof that the Lord, whose zeal is so terrible against the ungodly, yet has no greater pleasure than to heal, to rescue, and to pardon all who seek Him.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

By the hands of the apostles were many signs and miracles done among the people (ver. 12). The wrath of God by the mouth of the apostles had consumed two hypocrites; but relief by the hands of the apostles happened to a great multitude of miserable people. The Lord proved thereby, that the former is His strange work, but that He delights in the latter. In the midst of wrath He remembers mercy; and as He shows His zeal against the wicked, so He does not turn away His heart from the wretched (Ap. Past.).

And of the rest durst no man join himself to them (ver. 13). It is observable, even to this day, that false souls, who will not give way to the word, avoid the company of a true servant of Christ, and do not willingly approach him (Apost. Past.). The judgment on Ananias and Sapphira was a public proof that great and mixed crowds are not pleasing to the Lord. Therefore at first it had this effect, that no one ventured to join himself to the Church, but that the power of the Spirit and of truth, which was perceptible in believers, kept back others from giving themselves out to be something without good reason (Rieger).

And believers were the more added to the Lord (ver. 14). In spite of the example of punishment. Thus it does not happen as

false prudence fears, which preserves nothing of the seriousness and severity of a regular Church discipline, because it thinks that that will frighten people away. No! Discipline well kept will improve matters (Starke).—By pruning, God promotes the growth of the blessed tree of the Church (Quesnel).

Peter's shadow (ver. 15). A teacher becomes sometimes disheartened, when he recognises and sees his own weakness, and perhaps thinks: What shall I effect, when I myself sit in the shade, and am more like a shadow than a living man? But God can use the most insignificant thing, if it be entirely devoted to Him, for the greatest purposes, as He did the shadow of Peter (Apost. Past.).—"The Lord is my shade," said the soul of Peter. The shadow did not certainly do it: and he who trusted to the overshadowing of a man would have been punished by the spirit-discerning apostle; but the power of God, which the sick sought in Peter, effected it (Besser).

There came also a multitude from the neighbouring cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick folks (ver. 16). Happy is he who, oppressed by his need, often raises his heart to the heavenly Jerusalem, from thence to obtain his recovery (Quesnel).—*And them which were vexed with unclean spirits.* We must in our ministry despair of no one, even though he were possessed with the most unclean spirits, and they were in number legion (Apost. Past.).—*The blessing of a divine sifting-time in the Church.* 1. The chaff flies off, either (*a*) driven out, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; or (*b*) kept at a distance, as in the case of the people who did not venture to join themselves to the believers. 2. The wheat remains behind: (*a*) purified in faith; (*b*) united in love.—*The mysterious power of a person filled with the divine Spirit.* 1. He repels the wicked (ver. 13), and attracts the good (ver. 14). 2. He is the torment of unclean spirits (ver. 16), and the refreshing to the weary and heavy laden (ver. 18). 3. To the enemies of the truth He is the savour of death unto death (Ananias and Sapphira,—the priests and the elders), and to souls desiring salvation, a savour of life unto life (the sick who were brought to Peter,—believers who were added to the Church).—*All human instruments point back to the only original source of salvation.—From the shadow of Peter to the light of Christ.* Salvation does not proceed from the shadow of Peter, however fondly weakness and folly cling and attach

themselves to the mere shadowy side of the chosen instruments, to human forms, peculiarities, nay, weaknesses (idolatry of preachers, ministers, heads of sects, the worship of relics, etc.); but it proceeds from that which in Peter is light and life—from Christ. 2. Salvation does not proceed from Peter, but from Him whose strength is perfected in Peter's weakness—from Christ. Thus Peter's shadow points to Christ, the Light of the world, the Sun of righteousness.—If salvation comes not from Peter, much less does it come from the shadow of Peter—the Pope.—*What cures sick souls?* 1. Not the shadow of Peter nor the garment of Christ (Luke viii. 44): that is, no external thing, and no external act. 2. But the light of Peter and the power of Christ: that is, life from God, manifested in Christ and in His witnesses, discerned and appropriated by faith.—*The Gospel of Christ the true pool of Bethesda.* Sickness and misery ought to help to increase the Church of Christ. All the sick must be brought to Jerusalem, if they are to be healed; but it is to the Jerusalem which is above, that is the mother of us all (Gossner).

SECTION III.

A STRONGER ONSET OF THE SADDUCEAN PARTY, WHEREBY ALL THE APOSTLES ARE ARRESTED, BRINGS ABOUT, BY MEANS OF THEIR MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE FROM PRISON, THEIR BOLD ANSWER BEFORE THE COUNCIL, AND THE INTERCESSION OF GAMALIEL, SUFFERINGS INDEED FOR THE SAKE OF JESUS, BUT IN THE END DELIVERANCE.—(CHAP. V. 17–42.)

A.

The Arrest of the Apostles, whom, however, the Angel of the Lord miraculously delivers; whereupon, being cited before the Chief Council, they voluntarily present themselves.

CHAP. V. 17–26.

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all who were with him, that is the sect of the Sadducees, and were full of zeal, 18 And laid hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19 But an angel of the Lord by night

opened the prison-doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20 Go, and stand, and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. 21 When they heard that, they went by break of day into the temple, and taught. But the high priest came, and they who were with him, and called together the council, and all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came and found them not in the prison, they returned, and gave information, saying, 23 The prison we found shut with all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but, when we had opened, we found no man therein. 24 When the priest, and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests, heard this saying, they were in doubt what would come out of it. 25 Then came one and informed them, Behold, the men whom ye cast into prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people. 26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

Ver. 18. Αὐτῶν is wanting in many MSS. and versions, and is, without doubt, an addition by a transcriber.

Ver. 23. Ἔξω is doubtless spurious, and arose from ἔσω following: none of the best MSS. have it; ἐπί is attested by the most important MSS.; πρό is a later correction, being the more usual word.

Ver. 24. Ὁ τε ἱερεύς is awanting in many important MSS. and versions, but it was certainly erased, because it was not understood, as οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς followed; whilst it would certainly not have been inserted into the text, if not there originally.

Ver. 26. Lachmann, on the authority of several MSS., omits ἵνα, as if μή belonged to ἐφοβοῦντο, and then ἵνα would be incorrect.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Then arose the high priest, and put them in prison.*—This second and even more violent interference of the Jewish supreme authorities proceeded very decidedly from the Sadducean party. The high priest (without doubt, according to chap. iv. 6, Annas, although his son-in-law, Caiaphas, was in office) arose, bestirred himself to act and to interfere (ἀναστάς); and with him πάντες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ, all who were united with him for this purpose, and these were none other than the sect of the Sadducees. It is not said that the high priest himself belonged to this sect (for which there exists no other testimony), but only that this sect joined with him. It is very possible, if Annas himself was a Pharisee, that by the appearance of the Christian Church, party relations were laid aside for a time, their mutual variance was abated in the presence of a common opponent, and the Sadducean party, who took the lead in the opposition to the apostles, gained over the high priest for their purpose. As the

preaching of the apostles had its centre-point in its testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, it naturally followed that it was the Sadducees who were stirred up to the most active opposition.

2. *But an angel of the Lord.*—The apostles were delivered from prison by an angel of the Lord during the night. It has been attempted to explain this deliverance in a natural manner, and a stroke of lightning, an earthquake, the jailor himself, or a courageous Christian, have been suggested; but all this is directly opposed to the biblical narrative. It might just as well be said that the narrative is mythically embellished (Meyer), or that it is unhistorical (Baur, Zeller).—Apart from the supposition that there were no angels, and no miracles done by them, there is in the narrative itself no handle given for doubt, except that, 1. In the trial before the Sanhedrim the deliverance out of prison is not touched upon at all. This certainly proves that the narrative is very summary and incomplete, but not that it is untrustworthy. 2. It might also appear that the deliverance was without an object, inasmuch as the apostles had afterwards to appear before the court, and to suffer correction. But from the latter circumstance that conclusion does not justly follow; for Luke expressly relates, that the opponents were struck with the event and rendered helpless (ver. 24), so that as regards them the miracle effected its object at least in part; and that the apostles were mightily strengthened in the faith by their miraculous deliverance, it is easy to imagine, and that indeed appears from ver. 20. Moreover, the apostles stood before the council in a very different position, when they presented themselves entirely voluntarily, than if, as prisoners, they had been led out of prison. Therefore the supposed want of an object in the occurrence is after all only apparent.

3. *Go.*—The order of the angel was, that they should stand free and undismayed (*σταθέντες*), and preach openly in the temple to the people; *τὰ ῥήματα τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης*, are the words which relate to this life—the blessed life in Christ and by Christ. By adopting the supposition (by no means necessary) of an hypallage, the idea "words of life" arises, which appears less suitable to Luke and to that early time.

4. *But the high priest came.*—Whilst the apostles are already teaching in the temple, the high priest and his party assemble the whole Sanhedrim in order to try them. *Πᾶσα ἡ γερουσία*

τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσρ. cannot be understood otherwise than as the πρεσβύτεροι (chap. iv. 5). Meyer and Stier, straining the word, indeed suppose the whole college of the elders, and thus an extraordinary session, at which the Sanhedrim was strengthened by the elders of the people who did not belong to the chief council. But there is no mention in other accounts of such enlarged sessions; and the second book of Maccabees invariably gives to the Sanhedrim the title γερουσία; in our passage therefore we are rather to understand a tautology, used for the purpose of pointing out the completeness of the assembly.

5. *And when they heard these sayings.*—Ὁ ἱερεύς (ver. 24) can indicate no other than the high priest himself, whilst by οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς are to be understood the high priests in the wider sense. The captain of the temple guard, who was without doubt of priestly rank, had probably (as in chap. iv.) been active in the arrest of the apostles.

6. *Then went the captain.*—The captain of the temple led the apostles before the Sanhedrim, yet of their own accord, and without violence: ἵνα μὴ λιθασθ. is the motive of abstinence from violence, and is most naturally connected with ἤγαγεν—βίας, instead of with ἐφοβοῦντο: examples from the Attic classics are adduced where φοβεῖσθαι is constructed with ὅπως μὴ, ἵνα μή; yet the passive λιθασθ. is rather in favour of the former construction: to make a parenthesis of ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ τὸν λαὸν is very easy. This symptom of the voice of the people is remarkable. The guard must have supposed it possible that the people would have stoned them, if they used violence against the apostles. The popular favour toward the apostles without doubt reached its highest point. This is chiefly explainable from the numerous benefits conferred on whole families by the healing of their sick, as well as by this last occurrence, that the apostles, imprisoned the day before, were delivered, without human aid, by the interposition of God, and in consequence spoke to the people with peculiar power and boldness.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. As Christ, only as the Crucified One, is our Saviour, and the cross the badge of the Gospel, so also the history of the apostles and of the primitive Church is a development under the cross. After each blessing a trouble follows, whether from

within or from without. But the most glorious and heavenly comfort is also shared by the righteous at the cross.

2. The angel of the Lord serves here, not only as the instrument of the government of God the Father over the world, but also as the instrument of the exalted Son of God: he interposes not only in the events of common daily life, but also in the progress of the kingdom of God, in the development of the Church of Christ.

3. The angel enjoined the apostles to declare unto the people "all the words of this life." The angel belongs to the heavenly world which knows no death. He has thus feeling and sympathy, power and ability, only for that which is called life and has life. Therefore numerous angels appeared at the birth of the Redeemer, who is the Life of the world, and at His resurrection, as the most glorious and death-conquering manifestation of His life. The angels rejoice over the repentance of a sinner; and only the words which treat of the Life that has appeared and brought life to the world, are pleasing to them, and worthy of their helpful and encouraging ministry.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Then the high priest rose up (ver. 17). When the Lord rises up to build His Sion by His servants, then the enemy also rises up to prevent the building by his servants.—*The sect of the Sadducees.* The indolent and sinful carnal life of the Sadducees of ancient and modern times does not bestir itself, so long as it remains untouched by the Spirit of God and by His judgments. But whenever the disciples of Christ, full of the Holy Ghost, testify against it by word and deed, then it breaks forth into open enmity and satanic zeal against God and His Gospel. "How often would the Sadducean Annas, who serves the flesh, and withal bears office under Christ, have put believers and faith in fetters!" (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*And were full of zeal.* The servants of Christ full of the Holy Ghost: the enemies of Christ full of hellish zeal.—*Godly and godless zeal.* 1. For what, both are zealous? 2. How, both are zealous?

And put them in the common prison (ver. 18). The bonds are praiseworthy and the fetters honourable which we bear for the sake of Christ (Quesnel).

But the angel of the Lord (ver. 19). There is a divine "but"

which often puts to shame all human plans. Men are prepared with their evil designs; then this "but" steps in. Joseph says to his brethren, Ye thought evil against me, "but" God meant it for good. David complains in the second psalm that the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord and His Anointed; "but" He that dwelleth in heaven laughs at them, the Lord has them in derision (Ahlfeld).—*Opened by night the prison doors.* Suffering does not long endure. Art thou discouraged, thou bearer of the cross? It often does not last the night (Ps. xxx. 6). No bolt and bar are so strong, but that the Lord can make to His people an open door. Let the cross be as heavy as it will, yet He has set a limit to it: no stone of anguish lies too heavily upon me; He rolls it away from the door of my heart. He who has the keys to bring His messengers out from a material prison, has also the keys of hell and of death, yea the keys of heaven and of blessedness (Apost. Past.).—*The angels of God ministering to our salvation.* 1. As the friends of the righteous. 2. As the watchers in the night. 3. As rescuers from trouble. 4. As directors to the way of duty. 5. As messengers of the heavenly life to the world. 6. As conveyers to the heavenly life and eternal joy.—How great is the value of man in the sight of God, that there is an entire invisible world to help him to blessedness! How comforting is the assurance, that they who are for us are more than those who are against us! (Arndt).

Go stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life (ver. 20). Not, Go and hide yourselves; but, Go and speak. Not, Speak thereof to your own; but, Speak in the temple to the people. For the execution of such a commission, people are required who do not consult with flesh and blood, but are at all times ready to say, "Lord, at Thy word" (Luke v. 5). With such the Lord may venture something (Williger). —*All the words of this life. The word of Christ proved to be a word of life in and by the apostles.* They have in the strength of this word, 1. received a divine life in themselves; 2. brought a new life into the world; 3. ventured with joy their temporal life; 4. gained victoriously the eternal life.

We found no man within (ver. 23). Out of every persecution, for the sake of Christ, believers come forth more gloriously. 1. Where Christ comes, there life bestirs itself (ver. 16); 2. but

the enemy cannot see the life (ver. 17): he will put it in prison and bonds, wherever he can (ver. 18); 3. yet it will come forth more gloriously (vers. 19–23).

They were perplexed concerning them (ver. 24). How beneficial would this consternation have been to the enemies of the Lord, if they had recognised the power of God and submitted themselves to His almighty arm (Apost. Past.). *Then came one and told them* (ver. 25). When the object is to deliver up Christ and His people, there will not be wanting a Judas.—*They feared the people.* The fear of God makes men fearless; ungodliness makes men cowardly.—*How the Lord is glorified in the joys and sufferings of His servants.* 1. In the blessing which follows their work. 2. In the sufferings which are mixed with their blessings. 3. In the aid which He affords to His suffering servants (Langbein). — *How the Lord builds His Church by the protection which He affords it in the season of persecution.* 1. He permits His enemies to rage, in order that the innocence of the persecuted may be manifested by the impure zeal of the persecutors. 2. He clears the way to His servants, in order that their powerful working may make manifest the weakness of their enemies (Lisco).

B.

The Bold Defence of the Apostles before the Chief Council, who, in consequence of the intercession of Gamaliel, after the infliction of corporeal chastisement, release them.

Chap. v. 27–42.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, saying, 28 We have strictly commanded you not to teach in this name; and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 Then answered Peter and the apostles, saying, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers has raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, having hanged Him on a tree. 31 Him has God exalted by His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses of these words; and the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them who obey Him. 33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them. 34 Then stood up in the council a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, highly esteemed among all the people, and commanded to put the men out

for a little, and said unto them, 35 Ye men of Israel, take heed what you do in relation to these men. 36 For before these days rose up Theudas, and gave out that he was somebody; and a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves to him: who was slain; and all who followed him were scattered, and brought to nought. 37 After him rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxation, who drew many people into rebellion after him: he also perished; and all who adhered to him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, Abstain from these men, and let them alone: if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 But if it be of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them, lest ye be found even to fight against God. 40 Then to him they assented: and having called the apostles, they scourged them, and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 Then they went joyfully from the presence of the council, because they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And they ceased not daily in the temple, and from house to house, to proclaim the gospel of Jesus the Messiah.

Ver. 27. Οὐ is awanting in A.B., and in some of the old versions and fathers; it is certainly spurious, for if originally there, it would not have been omitted, whilst its insertion easily took place for the sake of ἐπηρώτησε.

Ver. 32. Αὐτοῦ after ἐσμέν appeared to be superfluous, because μάρτυρες has already a genitive, on which account in some MSS. and versions it is left out, or replaced by ἐν αὐτῷ, but, as a difficult reading, it is without doubt genuine.

Ver. 33. Ἐβουλεύοντο is indeed not so strongly attested as ἐβούλοντο, but it deserves the preference, because the latter might sooner be derived from the former, being considered an improvement.

Ver. 34. Τοὺς ἀνθρώπους was replaced in many MSS. and versions by τοὺς ἀποστόλους, but is sufficiently attested, and suits very well a speech of Gamaliel.—Τι after βραχύ is not attested, and betrays itself as an addition.

Ver. 36. Προσεκλίθη is a difficult reading, sufficiently attested, though not elsewhere found in the N.T. It has on this account been replaced by different words, as προσεκλήθη, προισεκολλήθη, προσετέθη.

Ver. 39. The Future, δυνήσεσθε is strongly attested; the Present, δύνασθε, was put in its place, in order to express as strongly as possible Gamaliel's vote.—Αὐτούς has many important MSS. and versions for it, whilst αὐτό is weakly attested, and is evidently an alteration to suit τὸ ἔργον, and to explain the sense.

Ver. 41. Τοῦ ὀνόματος is undoubtedly the original; the explanatory additions are (after ὀνόμ.) αὐτοῦ or Ἰησοῦ, τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ κυρίου, etc.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *And the high priest asked them.*—Ἐπηρώτησεν does indeed lead us to expect a formal question of the examining judge. But this is not the case, as οὐ is spurious. Yet the address of the high priest with its reproach, that notwithstanding the ex-

press prohibition, the apostles had spread their doctrine, is at least indirectly a call for a reply.

2. *We have strictly commanded you.*—The high priest designedly alludes to Jesus without mentioning His name: he says only, *τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ—τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου*; as if it were incompatible with his dignity even to name Jesus. Peter, on the contrary, is not ashamed of Jesus: he names Him with all boldness, and renders honour to Him with all his might.

3. *And behold ye have.*—What the high priest most severely charges the apostles with is, that they would ostensibly *ἐπαγαγεῖν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς τὸ αἷμα τοὺ ἀνθρώπου τούτου.* Meyer considers this equivalent to, that ye would cause the blood of this man to be avenged on us by an insurrection of the people. But there is not so much contained in the expression. It means rather that the apostles would lay upon them the responsibility and the guilt of shedding His blood. In this reproach, the secret disquietude of a conscience, which feels an anathema pressing heavily upon it, is betrayed. And yet there was some truth in the accusation against the apostles: indeed, Peter says in the presence of the Sanhedrim, Ye have killed Jesus, ye have by your hands taken away His life (*διεχειρίσασθε*). But the hateful, revengeful, and hostile disposition which the high priest imputed to the apostles, was not theirs; on the contrary, in ver. 31 there is indirectly made to the Sanhedrim an offer of repentance and forgiveness for that sin.

4. *We must obey God rather than men.*—This truth (ver. 29) is the same as in chap. iv. 19; only with this difference, that the manner in which it was then expressed was less decided than at this time. For in the fourth chapter, Peter did not until the conclusion of the trial assert this principle; but here he brings it forward at the very beginning. There he appealed in a certain manner to the members of the Sanhedrim themselves, and referred to their conscience (*εἰ δίκαιόν ἐστιν—κρίνατε*); but here he briefly but determinedly expresses this maxim as an undeniable truth, entirely apart from the judgment of his judges, and even in direct opposition to it.

5. *The God of our fathers* (*ὁ Θεὸς—ἤγειρεν Ἰησοῦν*).—Meyer, after Erasmus and others, refers this to His resurrection: but *ἔγειρειν* is always in the Acts of the Apostles united with *ἐκ νεκρῶν* when it denotes the resurrection; and besides, the suc-

cession of sentences with ἤγειρεν—διεχειρίσασθε—ὕψωσε speaks in favour of a sequence in point of time being likewise expressed; according to which ἤγειρεν indicates simply the raising up of Jesus, as "the sent of God." Thus ὕψωσε (ver. 31) includes both the resurrection and ascension.

6. *When they heard that.*—Διεπρίοντο signifies literally, they were sawn through: *dissecabantur* (Vulg.), *findebantur*, they were cut to the heart, they were moved with hot displeasure; so that the idea to make away with the men suggested itself to many of the members. On this they consulted with one another, though secretly; for we cannot suppose a formal and open consultation until the apostles were removed (ver. 34).

7. *Gamaliel* is described in three particulars. 1. He was a member of the Sanhedrim. 2. He was a follower of the party of the Pharisees. 3. He was a doctor of the law. The two last particulars are further illustrated in chap. xxii. 3, where Paul, who there evidently describes himself as having been a Pharisee (ἀκρίβεια τοῦ πατρῴου νόμου), states that he sat at the feet of Gamaliel as his teacher. As regards the first particular, many have imagined that Gamaliel was the president of the council; but τις ἐν τῷ συνεδρ. cannot possibly mean president, but merely a simple member of the council. Two learned men of the name of Gamaliel are known to us in Jewish history. Gamaliel I., or the elder, the son of the Rabbi Simeon, and the grandson of the celebrated Hillel; and Gamaliel II., or Gamaliel of Jabne. Both are in the Talmud called Rabban, and are represented as presidents of the Sanhedrim. There can be no allusion here to the younger or second Gamaliel, as he flourished after the destruction of Jerusalem, from about 80–118 after Christ. But, on the other hand, there is, chronologically, nothing in the way of supposing here the elder Gamaliel, since according to the Talmud he flourished under Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius, and is said to have died eighteen years after the destruction of Jerusalem. An internal difficulty to conceiving the Gamaliel of Luke identical with the Gamaliel of the Talmud would only occur if the old Christian tradition (Recognit. Clem. I. 65, Photius Cod. 171) is something more than a mere conjecture arising from this passage, namely, that Gamaliel was secretly a Christian, and that laterly he, along with his son Abib, and Nicodemus, was baptized by Peter and John. This would not

agree with the strong pharisaical and natural character of the first Gamaliel, as may be gathered from Jewish sources. But his advice, vers. 35–39, does not justify the above supposition.

8. *Ye men of Israel.*—Gamaliel counsels only caution and delay instead of a rash and precipitate proceeding, of which they might soon have to repent: and therefore he advises that the apostles should be let go unpunished. He founds this advice on experience, and on the conviction drawn from it, that if this work were merely of human origin, it would fall to the ground of itself; but if, on the other hand, it were willed and caused by God, it could not possibly be destroyed. It cannot be gathered from the words which of these two suppositions the speaker himself held to be the more probable. Meyer, after Bengel, infers from the use of *εἰ* c. Ind. Pres. in the latter clause, compared with *ἐάν* c. Conj. in the first clause, that Gamaliel himself regarded the divine character of Christianity as the more probable. *Εἰ* c. Ind. Pres. is much more objective than *ἐάν* c. Conj.; that is to say, with the latter construction a case is supposed as happening; whilst with the former, without regard to what takes place, it is only simply declared under what condition something will happen (see Bäumlein). Gamaliel supposes the possibility that the work of the apostles may be of God, and that therefore opposition against the apostles may be sinful opposition against God Himself (*θεομάχοι*). Moreover, the citation of the two examples to which Gamaliel appeals indicates that he, as a decided Pharisee, expected that this new doctrine, like many other similar innovations, would soon fall to the ground. And thus this speech agrees very well with the historical character of Gamaliel I.

9. *For before these days.*—The two historical instances to which Gamaliel appeals are the fates of Judas of Galilee and Theudas. The first is known from Josephus in more places than one (Antiq. 18, 1, 1; 20, 5, 2; Bell. Jud. 2, 9, 1). Judas was a native of Gamala, in lower Gaulonites; and hence he is once called by Josephus "the Gaulonite," and twice also as here, "the Galilean." That, on the occasion of the census which Augustus ordered to be made by Quirinus, he stirred up the people (Jos. Ant. 18, 1, 1), agrees perfectly with the statement, *ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς ἀπογραφῆς*. He represented that measure as a means of subjugation, and appealed to the maxim, *μόνον ἡγεμόνα καὶ δεσπότην τόν θεὸν εἶναι*. Luke relates, that

Judas himself perished; Josephus informs us of the death of his two sons (Ant. 20, 5, 2): statements which complete each other. And though Josephus mentions the rising again of the party of Judas in the Jewish war, yet this agrees well enough with our passage, which only mentions the dispersion of the party, but not its destruction. Whilst in regard to Judas, our passage harmonizes with Josephus, it is nevertheless apparently irreconcileable with the other instance. With respect to Theudas, the case stands thus: Josephus gives an account of one Theudas, perfectly corresponding in all particulars, but differing widely in chronological date. 1. Theudas stirred up the people, and had numerous followers. 2. He gave himself out to be an extraordinary person (λέγων εἶναί τινα ἑαυτόν); in particular, he declared himself to be a prophet, and promised by his word to divide Jordan (Josephus). 3. He himself was slain, and his followers came to nought: according to Josephus, he was captured and beheaded, whilst his followers were partly cut down by the horsemen sent against him, and partly captured. These are the essential statements in which ver. 36 strikingly agrees with Josephus (Ant. 20, 5, 1). But the time differs remarkably. According to Luke, the rising of Judas happened after that of Theudas (μετὰ τοῦτον), but the latter must necessarily have happened before the speech of Gamaliel (πρὸ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν). Josephus, on the other hand, distinctly states that this Theudas rose up in the procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus, that is, in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, not before the year 44, whereas this speech of Gamaliel happened in the time of Tiberius (+ 37). As Judas, according to the concurrent testimonies of Josephus and Luke, rose up at the time of the census, there is a space of about fifty years between the period when the Theudas of ver. 36 and the Theudas of Josephus must have risen up. It is therefore supposed that the Theudas of the Acts is entirely different from the Theudas of Josephus: so Bengel, Baumgarten, and other learned men. For this it is argued: 1. That the name Theudas was not uncommon among the Jews (Lightfoot). 2. That at that time, revolts were frequent among the Jews. 3. That Josephus, in his history, is by no means complete, and that he may easily have omitted a former Theudas about the time of Herod the Great. This possibility, in the abstract, is not to be disputed. But the agreement between ver. 36 and

Josephus in the above three statements of fact is yet so striking, that an unlearned reader receives involuntarily the impression, as if one and the same man and event were referred to, especially as every head of an insurrection had not the presumption to ascribe to himself a more than human authority. But then an error in regard to time must be admitted, a *πρόληψις* is put into the mouth of Gamaliel (De Wette, Neander, Meyer).

10. *Abstain from these men.*—The advice of Gamaliel, who with calm judgment and a degree of impartiality opposed the excited fanaticism and passions of others, especially of the Sadducees, found so far a response, that the assembly abstained from their project of murder, and resolved to release the apostles. Yet the punishment of corporeal correction was adjudged to them and inflicted on them. And this, first, in order not to incur the appearance of a completely unfounded interference; and secondly, to resent the disobedience of the apostles. Honour and dignity appeared to demand that the threat formerly announced should now be put in force. But the apostles were not to be frightened by corporeal punishment and by the repeated prohibition: they rather departed with an elevated consciousness of honour which consisted in their being called upon to suffer shame for the name of Jesus; and they proceeded to testify of Jesus as the Christ, both publicly in the temple, and privately in the houses of believers.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. *Jesus a Prince and a Saviour.*—*Ἀρχηγός*, for He stands at the summit, not only as the Chief, the Author and Finisher of faith, but also as He to whom obedience is to be rendered. An indication of the kingly office of Christ. As *ἀρχηγός* Christ has a host who follow Him, a kingdom which belongs to Him. But He is not only *ἀρχηγός*, but also *σωτήρ*. He is the Saviour from the greatest evil, from the most pressing danger, namely, from sin and its wages, from the wrath of God and eternal perdition. Only to save, to make blessed, to minister, is the aim of His sovereignty: He seeks not His own honour, power, and glory, but the salvation of souls. "God has exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour." By His resurrection and ascension, God has highly exalted Him (*ὕψωσε τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ*), and thereby first conferred on Him the dignity of *σωτήρ* and *ἀρχηγός*. He

was both already in the state of humiliation, as Son of God and Son of man. But it is His exaltation which has so constituted Him, that we must treat Him with reverence, and that His power to rule and govern, to save and to make blessed, can be discernible by all.

2. The apostles testified from the first, that without change of mind, the salvation of Jesus Christ is not to be attained. So here also, they testify that to all who repent of their sins and change their minds, forgiveness and grace will be imparted through Jesus Christ. Peter here indicates that conversion and the remission of sins are the free gifts of God (*δοῦναι μετάνοιαν καὶ ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*). That forgiveness is a free gift of God, that man cannot blot out his own guilt or forgive his own sins, is evident enough, and was already taught in the Old Testament (Ps. xxxii.). But that change of mind is also a gift of God, which He bestows on men by the gracious operations of His Spirit, is here distinctly testified. Not as though the freedom of the will would thereby be denied; but, without preventing and operating grace, there can never take place a true change of mind and forgiveness. And further, this gracious operation, in its wide measure and extent, was conditioned by the exaltation of Jesus. God has exalted Him in order to give change of mind and forgiveness.

3. The witnesses for Jesus are, according to ver. 32, the apostles and the Holy Ghost; namely, the Holy Ghost in those who, on the word of the apostles, do the will of God and believe on Jesus. The apostles here represent their own testimony as a human testimony, borne by eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses, and therefore credible and trustworthy. But a second testimony supports this testimony, so that the matter rests on the mouth of two witnesses: the divine supports the human,—the eternal and enduring, that which is dying away. Not only were the apostles witnesses, but also the Holy Ghost. Every man who gives credit to the preached Gospel, and obediently submits himself to it, receives the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost bears witness in the man, witness of Jesus Christ as Lord and Redeemer: and he who receives this testimony is perfectly convinced of its truth. The testimony of the apostles is for us and for all ages contained in the Holy Scriptures; and thus for us the word and the Spirit are the two witnesses of Christ. But only by the Spirit does the word become living and clear to us, convincing

and persuading, so that the soul receives a divine certainty of redemption by Christ,—of the power of God which is in the Gospel.

4. The whole circumstances of this transaction are a manifest proof that Jesus Christ, exalted by the Father, rules in the midst of His enemies. He has a kingdom, and He protects and increases His kingdom; but without doing any violence to human liberty. No man is compelled by the irresistible operation of God to give credit to His word and to the testimony of the apostles, and to render obedience to that word and testimony. Whoever will not receive the word for his salvation, is not forced. He may experience it as a sharp sword, he may revolt against it, he may even devise murderous schemes against the servants of God. But man proposes, and God disposes. The Lord is able to prevent the counsel of the wicked. He knows where it is necessary to take a man out of the camp of the enemies of His word, to move his conscience, so that from the fear of God he opposes the godless plan. And He knows how to turn the minds of His enemies that they yield to the warning, and abstain from forcible oppression of the witnesses of Jesus.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us (ver. 28). The pious sheep of Christ have always troubled the water to the wolf (Starke).—The kingdom of this world in its opposition to the kingdom of God always shows itself as mixed of iron and clay: of clay, by its fear from the feeling of its own weakness; of iron, by its obstinacy against the truth. To excuse their obstinacy, men fasten upon a part of the truth, which they urge upon their heart as an excuse: "Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us." They do not think on the forgiveness offered them.—Assuredly we would with the preaching of the cross bring the blood of Christ upon you: not for your condemnation, but for your salvation.—*The preaching of the blood of Christ.* 1. The most effectual preaching of repentance. 2. The most powerful preaching of comfort.

Whom ye slew (ver. 30). We dare not omit preaching on those points which the world loves not to hear, on account of its hatred: the wounds must be opened and the sores probed, before they can be healed (Apost. Past.).

Jesus Christ a Prince and a Saviour (ver. 31). 1. A prince,

(*a*) according to His heavenly origin, (*b*) according to His divine credentials even when in the form of a servant, (*c*) according to His glorious exaltation to the right hand of God the Father. 2. A Saviour: (*a*) A Saviour already in the manger by His self-renunciation; (*b*) a Saviour on the cross by His sacrifice; and (*c*) a Saviour on the throne by His intercession with the Father. 3. Both a Prince and a Saviour. (*a*) If He were not a Saviour, He could not be a Prince—His fairest princely ornament is His crown of thorns. (*b*) If He were not a Prince, He could not be a Saviour—the efficacy of His sacrifice depends upon His divine dignity. (*c*) As a Prince we must honour and obey Him, and as a Saviour we must love and confide in Him, in order to become partakers of His salvation.—*The salvation in Christ.* 1. Offered by Him, as the Prince and Saviour. 2. To be appropriated by us in repentance and forgiveness of sins.

When they heard that, they were cut to the heart (ver. 33). Whoever will not receive the truth into his heart, it may nevertheless pierce his heart. Even this is a victory (Starke).—*And they took counsel to slay them.* It is a proof of the weakness of the enemies of the truth, that they would fill the mouths of confessors with earth and kill them, instead of stopping them with arguments (Apost. Past.).

Then stood there up in the council a Pharisee, named Gamaliel (ver. 34). Thus among His enemies, God knows how to find an advocate for His cause (Starke).—Gamaliel was certainly no true friend of the Saviour, and we must not praise his conduct above measure. But yet there lay at bottom not a mere natural prudence. That man has indeed received many a knock at his heart, and has stood under preventing and warning grace, which at least has worked a fear in him not to injure himself (Apost. Past.).—To him, if to any one, the Lord might have said, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God (Schleiermacher).

Before these days rose up Theudas (ver. 36). The false prophet and the true. 1. The former rises up of his own accord, as Theudas and Judas; the latter is raised up by God. 2. The former boasts himself to be somebody; the latter does not boast of himself, but gives glory to God. 3. The former draws away the people after him; the latter leads souls to the Lord. 4. The former falls from heaven as a wandering star—Theudas and

Judas perish, are slain, and those who joined themselves to them were dispersed; the latter will shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.—*And there were joined to him.* Those who will not submit to the cross of Christ, submit to the prophets of Satan. Thus the Lord even now gives many who obstinately despise Him into the power of lying prophets, that they may come to ruin with them.—Unbelief leads into the arms of superstition.

Gamaliel's counsel (vers. 38, 39). We must not refer everything to the result: only spiritual sloth and doubt can arise from doing so. But those things which are beyond our conception, we rightly leave to God and wait the issue. We cannot say, Everything which has no stability is not of God; for then the destroyed churches of Asia Minor were not of God. Nor can we say, Everything which has stability is of God; for then the Turkish and heathen faiths which have endured so long, are of God (Starke).—Whoever would wait for the complete victory of Christ and His Church, must wait until the last day. Therefore the neutral policy of delay is of no value in the kingdom of Christ (Leonh. and Spieg.).—Gamaliel's counsel is prudent and likewise God-fearing; but yet he himself does not comply with that counsel, and in this he failed; for whoever is on his guard not to fight against God, must also recognise it as a duty to fight for God, to lay hold on the banner of the truth amid the raging of the people and the Gentiles, of the world and its troops. Gamaliel's counsel was the voice of God which spoke in his heart: his guilt was, that he did not follow that voice, that he did not take the Lord at His word, and prove whether there was falsehood in Him. "Whoever will do the will of Him that sent Me, he shall know whether this doctrine be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (Rudelbach).—The whole counsel rests on the false principle, that temporary and visible success decides concerning the divinity of a testimony or an undertaking. Is not this a denial of the cross? He whose heart, and not merely his understanding, is touched by the Holy Ghost, does not first wait for results, as little as the true supporters of missions do first wait for splendid missionary reports; but he is united to believers and avows himself for the Gospel, although it should even appear in the course of perishing, as in the persecutions the blood of the martyrs drew new multitudes. We cannot fight

against God, is the feeble half prudence of coldness and safety: We ought to believe and obey God's word, even before His work stands forth victoriously, is the true wisdom of the penitent. Nevertheless Gamaliel's voice in the council of the impious is yet of great significance, and represents, as it were, the conscience of the Sanhedrim; the voice of conscience testifying in every opponent of God, by which even reason advises to take care. We would therefore, with Luther, appeal to this Gamaliel-feeling of the enemies or of the indifferent, because more may come out of it: not only, like Thomas, wishing first to see, but willing to believe (Stier).—Gamaliel is a believer, though only a slightly enlightened one, in the Old Covenant, who holds that God cannot leave His people permanently in perplexity, and that therefore false prophets will soon be punished by Him (Gerlach).—Against that which can only be spiritually judged whether it is the work of man, no physical force ought to be used: this is one side of Gamaliel's counsel. But he has not advised that it should not be counteracted by spiritual force: and this he himself would not have omitted to do. The other side of his counsel is telling them, If it be a work of God, ye will not be able to extinguish it, but ye will be found fighting against God. And what greater affliction can there be than this, to be found fighting against God? If, when perhaps it is too late, when it cannot possibly be remedied, it become evident to a man how far he has erred from the right way,—that he has used the noble, and great, and glorious, and fair powers, which God has given him, in a manner directly contrary to the will of God, so that when the scales have fallen from his eyes, he himself must rejoice that the whole labour of his life is destroyed. Therefore, so long as it is yet possible that we may be in uncertainty with regard to anything whether it be a work of man or a work of God, so long is there no wiser counsel than the counsel of Gamaliel: none which can be more effectual to keep back well-meaning men from the road to destruction, and preserve every one that he lose not his life in vain efforts: none which likewise may be more effectual in kindling for every one the true light on his way, and in making him capable of the knowledge of the truth (Schleiermacher).

Three positions which the human heart takes up on the increase of the kingdom of God. 1. A hostile; 2. a prudential; 3. a

humbly active (Ahlfeld).—*Gamaliel's counsel.* 1. A convenient counsel for the spiritually idle, and for the politicians of the world. 2. A true counsel, in opposition to senseless zeal. 3. A half counsel, when it concerns us to recognise, decide, and act at once; when the question is about thy spiritual concerns (Beck). —*Gamaliel's counsel.* 1. A good counsel. (*a*) As a rule of judgment, when we see the end of God's ways; then at last it shall certainly hold good: "Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out." (*b*) As a rule of conduct, when carnal zeal will resort to carnal weapons in spiritual matters; and when no light has arisen to us whether a work be of God or of man. (In this sense, Luther applied the counsel of Gamaliel to the Elector of Treves, as one yet undecided.) 2. A bad counsel. (*a*) As a rule of judgment, when, in the midst of the imperfect course of the world, good and evil are judged according to their external and temporary success. (*b*) As a rule of conduct, when it is transformed into a pillow of laziness, to get rid of an inward and earnest decision, when God's word speaks distinctly enough, and God's Spirit points clearly enough; and to avoid courageous acting and energetic witness-bearing, when we are really decided.—*Gamaliel's counsel.* 1. A good counsel: Of humility before God, the supreme Judge; of charitableness toward our neighbour who thinks differently, and perhaps even erroneously; of watchfulness over ourselves and our passions. 2. A bad counsel: Of a policy, judging only according to outward success; of a toleration toward that which is evil; of an indifferentism, undecided in itself.—Better the deed of the apostles than the counsel of Gamaliel.—*God's counsel and man's deed, both appertain to the increase of God's kingdom.* 1. God's counsel: hence nothing against God and without God; this Gamaliel teaches us. 2. Man's deed: hence everything for God and with God; this we learn from the apostles. —*The Reformation powerfully proved to be the work of the living God.* 1. By the choice of the instruments which He used. 2. By the strong and durable foundation on which the work was built. 3. By the weapons of good warfare with which the founders contended. 4. By the fruits which it produced.

They scourged them (ver. 40). God leads His servants step by step to sufferings, in order gradually to accustom them to

the cross. 1. Threatening, chap. iv. 21. 2. Imprisonment, chap. v. 18. 3. Scourging, chap. v. 40. 4. Martyrdom, chap. vii. 60.

They departed from the presence of the council rejoicing (ver. 41). The servants and children of God are truly a wonder to the world. What philosophy teaches such things? (Apost. Past.).—They, the scourged, are the only persons who depart rejoicing. He who suffers with Him,—he who, not for his own sin, but in fact for Christ's sake, is exposed to shame, scourging, bonds, and persecution, whom Christ has united with Himself in the deepest humiliation,—can rejoice the most (Ahlfeld).—Four classes in the school of suffering. 1. I am obliged to suffer. 2. I am willing to suffer. 3. I am able to suffer. 4. I am permitted to suffer (Hartmann).

And they ceased not, ver. 42. The apostles, when they came to the people after their deliverance, neither complained of their enemies, nor boasted of their stedfastness: they sought not to save their honour, injured by the scourgings, but they preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Apost. Past.).

SECTION IV.

THE COMPLAINT OF THE HELLENISTS, AT THE NEGLECT OF THEIR WIDOWS IN THE CARE OF THE POOR, INDUCES THE APOSTLES TO CHOOSE SEVEN MEN, AND TO APPOINT THEM TO THIS SERVICE. INCREASE OF THE CHURCH.

CHAP. VI. 1–7.

1 But in those days, when the disciples became numerous, there arose a murmuring of the Greek Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were overlooked in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples together, and said, It is not agreeable that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, look ye out seven men among you, of good report, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we will appoint over this business. 4 But we will keep to prayer and the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a Jewish proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles; and they prayed, and laid their hands on them. 7 And the word of God

increased, and the number of disciples became very great in Jerusalem; and a great company of the priests also became obedient to the faith.

Ver. 3. Ἁγίου after πνεύματος appears to be an insertion: it is wanting in B.D., several versions, and Church fathers; the Syriac version has κυρίου instead of ἁγίου.

Ver. 3. Καταστήσομεν is decidedly to be preferred to the conj. σωμεν.

Ver. 7. Instead of τῶν ἱερέων, some MSS., the Syriac version, and Theophylact, have τῶν Ἰουδαίων, an objectionable correction.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But in those days.*—At the very time when the faith of the apostles was strongly manifested in the endurance of shame for the sake of Christ, and in the joyful preaching of the Gospel in spite of the threats of the authorities, and when the word was continually embraced by more, so that the Church increased rapidly: an evil suddenly arose, and that from within, and therefore the more dangerous. The threatenings from without were less serious than the danger from within. Those proceeded from the enemies of Jesus and of His Church; this, from His followers and the members of the Church itself. And the more numerous the Church became, the more easily might impure elements obtain entrance into it. The more liberally and kindly the poor were cared for, the more might this very circumstance draw many needy persons to the Church, who might find themselves deceived, if their hopes were extravagant and selfish.

2. *There arose a murmuring.*—Discontent, at first only in whispers, then increasing in loudness, arose among the Hellenists, and was directed against the Hebrews. Here a difference springs up in the Church, which threatens to grow into opposition and lead to a rupture. The one party are the Hebrews—Christian Jews who resided in Palestine or the Holy Land, and spoke the Hebrew or Aramaic language; the other party are the Hellenists—Christians who were not of Palestinean Jewish origin, but had their residence in other lands, as Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, etc., and who spoke the Greek as their native language. Without doubt, the latter also were for the most part Jews by birth, although there may have been individuals among them who were born Gentiles and had been incorporated as proselytes into the nation of Israel; at least we have an example of this kind in Nicolas, who is expressly denominated a proselyte. The native Jews, who cer-

tainly formed the majority of the Church, preserved, on account of their education and residence, their Jewish manners more purely and strictly. The others, on account of their descent from foreign Jews and their residence in foreign lands, had adopted not only the Greek language, but also imperceptibly foreign customs—Greek manners, which they mixed with the Jewish.

3. *That their widows.*—The particular reason of the discontent and jealousy of the Hellenists against the Palestinean-Jewish Christians was, that the widows of the Hellenistic-Jewish Christians were overlooked in the daily maintenance of the poor; and indeed this appears to have been the case for a considerable time (Imperf. παρεθεωροῦντο). The widows are not named for the poor collectively (Olshausen): rather, it may be supposed, first, that widows would be sooner overlooked than families,—householders knowing better how to represent their wants; and secondly, that the neglect of poor widows would be taken up more sensitively. What formed the ground and reason why the Hellenistic widows were neglected, can only be conjectured; we have no reason to suppose intentional neglect, arising perhaps from the self-conceit of the Palestinean Jews, or from their positive ill-will; rather, the want of sufficient personal acquaintance with the persons and circumstances of the widows of foreign origin, may have led to the oversight.

4. *Then called the twelve.*—The apostles, to whose ears the complaint came, interposed immediately to prevent the discontent taking deeper root, and to check in time everything which threatened harmony and brotherly love; and likewise, by a division of labour, to satisfy a want of the Church, and to preserve the apostolic office free from subordinate business not belonging to it and encroaching on its time. But the apostles did not act apart. That something must be done, and what must be done, they have determined among themselves: this they informed the Church. But they did not take upon themselves to designate the men to whom the new office should be transferred: they requested the Church to look out among themselves, and to propose worthy men who might be appointed to this office by them, the apostles. Therefore the apostles convoked (Med. προσκαλεσάμενοι) the multitude of disciples; that is, not a bare committee of the Church, not merely the original members, the 120 (Lightfoot, see

chap. i. 15), but the whole Church, that is, all the male members. The supposition, derived from seven being the number chosen, that the Jerusalem church already before this consisted of seven congregations, each of which assembled separately, and each selected a man (Mosheim and Kuinoel), is without foundation.

5. *It is not agreeable.*—The apostles declare to the Church without reserve, what they do not wish, and what they do wish. The first is thus expressed: *Οὐκ ἀρεστόν ἐστιν.* The use of the term does not permit us to take *ἀρεστόν* for *æquum* or *bonum*. Certainly it displeased the apostles, only because their consciences disapproved of it, and they did not think themselves able to justify it before God. They did not think it right to forsake the word of God, that is, the preaching of the Gospel; to disregard the ministry of the word, and, neglecting that which was their chief business, which the Saviour Himself had commanded as their first duty (*ἔσεσθέ μοι μάρτυρες*), to serve tables, that is, to assist in the management and distribution of food to the poor and widows. Not that the serving in itself appeared degrading to the apostles and unworthy of their office, for they considered the spiritual office itself as a *διακονία*; but only, they could not reconcile it with their duty to serve tables, to feed the body instead of nourishing the soul; to neglect the care of souls, in order to devote their time and strength to the care of the poor, did not please them. It is here tacitly supposed that the care of the poor can be carried on no longer as hitherto. For until now the apostles alone had the right and duty of governing and managing; the gifts of charity were laid at their feet, and to them belonged the distribution and application of these gifts. As the apostles, by the rapid increase of the Church, could not personally superintend everything, they employed the assistance of other members of the Church, but without any settled order, form, or official organization. As inequality arose from this irregular management of the business, and thereby discontent and variance were excited, so a remedy must be devised. The apostles would not adopt the course of devoting themselves to this business with their full strength, in order to satisfy all claims, because that was the same as to neglect their chief business. They would, on the contrary, keep themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. *Διακονία τοῦ λόγου* forms a contrast to *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*. They would devote themselves

continually and with their whole strength to the ministry of the word, the preaching of the Gospel, and along with it, and in the first instance, to prayer.

6. *Wherefore, brethren.*—But in order to give themselves without distraction to this holy and necessary chief business, the apostles wished to transmit the care of the Church in external matters to other hands, and indeed to a settled and independent office, an organized function. Accordingly they act thus: they put a part of the duties and privileges, hitherto belonging to them, into other hands; they set up a second office in the Church, beside the hitherto only existing office,—the apostleship, and thus make the commencement of completing and perfecting the organization of the Church of Christ. They neither refused, nor did they regard it as any want of trust in the Holy Ghost who guides the Church of Christ, to complete the still defective social organization of the Church, and to create in it a new office.

7. *And the saying pleased.*—But they do not act without the concurrence of the Church. They might transact the business alone, fully conscious that they did everything for the Church, and sought not their own. Indeed, they might say, that the existing discord itself was a diseased symptom in the Church, and that on that account, from love to the Church, it must be left entirely out of the business. They might delude themselves with the idea that duty to the Lord Himself and to their office required they should act perfectly self-dependent, and independently of all below them.—But the apostles did not think so, and did not act so. They treated the Church as full-grown; they bring before it the state of the case, and what should be done; and the whole Church pronounced the proposal good. The members of the Church, as requested by the apostles, chose seven men, and presented them to the apostles, as the men of their confidence.

8. The apostles demand important qualifications of the men who are to be placed before them. They ought to be, 1. *μαρτυρούμενοι*, that is, of recognised rectitude of character and conduct; they ought to enjoy a good reputation. 2. Besides this general moral requirement, they ought to be *πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας*, to possess the Spirit with His peculiar gifts and powers of wisdom and knowledge. But wherefore were such eminent personal gifts and qualifications requisite? Not simply

because the matter was about the superintendence of church property; but certainly also because those who were to hold this office were not to be restricted to the care of the body or to purely economical concerns, but were also really to attend to the spiritual care of the poor, and generally to perform a spiritual service in the Church. The apostles reserved for themselves the ministry especially devoted to the word and prayer, but they did not certainly divest themselves of all and every care for the concerns of the body: so here also, though the seven ought especially to attend to the care of the poor and the economical service in the Church, they were not certainly excluded from spiritual activity.

9. The seven men whom the Church chose are expressed by name. First of all, Stephen, who is described as a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and with whom the second part of this chapter and the whole of the following are concerned. That πίστις here denotes only fidelity and conscientiousness, is in the highest degree improbable: rather, his truly religious and Christian character is hereby indicated; and this was the reason why the Church selected a man so spiritually prominent, and probably proposed him first of all to the apostles. Philip is certainly the same who, after the death of Stephen, preached the Gospel in Samaria, and who between Jerusalem and Gaza baptized the officer of the court of Meroe; and who in chap. xxi. 8 is expressly mentioned as one of the seven under the title of "the Evangelist." The rest are entirely unknown to us. What later legends relate concerning them,—for example, that one or other was among the seventy disciples of Jesus, or where each of them was at a later period settled as bishop,—deserve no notice. It is worthy of remark that Nicolas was a proselyte of Antioch. Possibly, among the rest, one or other was a Gentile by birth, who in the course of his life was incorporated among the Jewish people by circumcision and sacrifice, before he believed in Jesus. But of this one only is it testified that he was a proselyte. That at a later period he became the head of a sect and the founder of the Nicolaitanes (Rev. ii. 15), is an entirely gratuitous supposition (although occurring in Irenæus), resting only on the mere combination of two passages.—Many inferences have been drawn from the circumstance, that all the seven names are Greek. First of all, that the seven were not native Palestinean Jews, but

Hellenists. This is understood, either as a proof of the impartiality of the Hebrews, who in the most generous manner sought to adjust the grievances of the Hellenists by the choice of men entirely of their party (Rothe); or as an indication that these seven were chosen entirely from the Hellenistic fraction of the Church, and that deacons had formerly been appointed for the Hebrew part (Vitringa, Mosheim). But both suppositions rest on no sure foundation, inasmuch as Greek names were very common at that time among the Hebrews. Probably the elected were partly Hebrews and partly Hellenists.

10. *Whom they set.*—The men chosen by the Church were set before the apostles, who transferred to them the new office, and solemnly ordained them to it by the imposition of hands and prayer. First they prayed in and with the Church, entreating for those chosen the grace of God in Christ; for He it was whom they should serve in the disciples, and especially in the poor, and from Him only can come preparation and fitness, blessing and success. Then they laid their hands on them, consecrating and blessing them, and transferring to them an office which hitherto belonged to themselves.

11. *And the word.*—The danger of internal division which threatened the Church was without doubt averted by the measure adopted, and especially by the appeal made to the better spirit of the Church, and by the seven working vigorously, with the blessing of God and with the elevating feeling of duty and of recognised office, and assisting the apostles. Luke, it is true, is silent of this; but, on the other hand, he speaks of a success which is still greater, and which presupposes the former. The stronger the unity of the Spirit was kept in the bond of peace, so much the more did the word of God increase, by the sympathy and reception which it found among ever-increasing numbers, so that the number of Christians in Jerusalem increased greatly, and even a great company of the priests ὑπήκουον τῇ πίστει. The expression indicates their conversion as an act of obedience to God's method of salvation in Christ: and this is here the more suitable, as especially with the priests a firm resolution and a strong act of will were requisite to break through doubts and obstacles, and to lay themselves at the feet of the Crucified, the only Mediator and Priest; and only a powerful impression of "God wills it," and a determined resolution to obey God, could turn the balance.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The discord within the Church between the Hellenists and the Hebrews is prefigurative. The first danger from within (chap. v. 1) had its root in the hypocritical selfishness of a married pair. The present danger had its root in a multitude or corporation, united by a fellowship of languages and customs of country and intercourse, so that a party spirit, stirred up by contending interests, threatened to develop itself. What is common in these two cases is, the natural man's asserting his earthly interests, partly money and partly honour, within the communion of faith and love in Christ Jesus. The new birth and the renewal of man and humanity are hindered, interrupted, and endangered by the old man again springing up. The Church of Christ is polluted and desecrated by the world in which it is, and which again stirs within it. And if even the primitive and apostolic Church was not a spotless ideal, so will this never be accomplished until the end. The circumstance is observable, that on both occasions the spots and wrinkles, which here came prominently forward in chap. v. 1 and chap. vi. 1, make their appearance precisely in that feature of the primitive Church which appears the most splendid and charming, namely, in its brotherly love and self-sacrificing liberality and assistance,—in the community of goods. Precisely within this most precious fruit of the young Christian life, does a worm gnaw; and where it was least to be expected, the old enemy stirs himself, and beside the Church which God has built, he builds his chapel.

2. How prominently does the truth stand before us, evidenced by this event, that the word of God, and the word of God only, is the means of salvation in the Church of Christ! The apostles firmly resisted the temptation which occurred to lose themselves in a Martha service, caring about many things, and to become engrossed therein, in order to put a stop to the discontent. On the contrary, they make for themselves only freer hands and more ample leisure for the ministry of the word. This is the apostolic calling. This is their chief business, the *διακονία τῆς καταλλαγῆς*. The word only, because it is the inspired word of God, has in itself the powers of salvation and the fulness of blessings. Fidelity to it is rewarded in a variety of

ways. The apostolic Church approves itself as the Church of the word. And every church which will be truly apostolical must also be a church of the word. The more the word of God steps behind the word of man, behind ceremonies, behind human rules and ordinances of the Church, behind affairs of government and mechanical service, the more is it removed from what it should be.

3. An instructive glance into the development of the Church of Christ is here afforded us. As the Redeemer Himself was born a true man, and increased in a purely human manner in age, wisdom, and favour with God and man; so also His Church is a truly human community. It increases not only in age, in the number of its members, and in its external extent, but it is also appointed, according to the will of its Founder and Lord, to increase inwardly. And especially in this manner, that its organization and government are formed and developed gradually from within outwards, from its centre of life and *punctum saliens*, from the beating heart of faith. It is not the case that the Redeemer placed His Church in the world, furnished with an apparatus, already perfect and complete, of offices, orders, and rules of government. He only gave to the Church the most indispensable and simplest office, when He appointed the apostles to be His witnesses. The rest was to arrange itself, and to be developed gradually, as necessity, time, and circumstances required, from within outward, by the spontaneity of the Church itself. And indeed it is the original office, the apostolate, from which all other offices, and orders must branch off. Christ is not Moses: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Neither the episcopate, nor the presbyterian office, nor the deaconate, was directly appointed by the Lord, or established by His verbal command. But the Spirit of the Lord, according to the rule of His word, and with reference to times and circumstances, has called into life what the want of each time proved to be useful, advisable, and necessary. Thus here the office of the seven was quietly established. It is true the chief consideration of the apostles was not directed to the office, but to the persons: "Look ye out among you seven men, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." And, without doubt, those who bore this office had at first no other name and official title than the "seven," for the Acts of the Apostles knows no

other title (see chap. xxi. 8). Yet the office of management arose from this, and was transplanted to other congregations. The method of investment into the office, by prayer and the imposition of hands, was, even as the appointment of the seven in general, a free act of the apostles, performed according to Old Testament example and the guidance of the Spirit in them.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

When the disciples became numerous, there arose a murmuring (ver. 1). The more the number of the Church increased, the more its perfection diminished (Quesnel).—The Church on earth has always trouble: if it is not persecuted from without, disorders arise from within, which are still more dangerous (Starke).—*Because their widows were neglected.* To overlook is human: to reform and improve is apostolical and Christian.—Though the righteous are ever so faithful in office, as the apostles here, yet they will not always be able to prevent evil reports.

It is not agreeable that we should leave the word of God (ver. 2). Disorders often necessitate good regulations, and evil customs good laws.—The duty of a Christian to a wise self-restriction in his activity (Lisco).

Of good report (ver. 3). Here the office of almoner receives its proper servants, when the apostles choose for it, not people who can only write, and count, and have a good judgment, but men who are full of the Spirit and of wisdom (Starke).—Spiritual goods must be spiritually administered. God will take account thereof (Rieger).

But we will keep to prayer and the ministry of the word (ver. 4). In these two words we have the entire life of a minister: prayer and preaching. By prayer, he receives and draws from God: by preaching, he gives what he has received from above (Gossner).—Prayer takes the precedence, because it must break the way for preaching, by opening the spirit and mouth of the preacher, and the ear and heart of the hearers.

And the word of God increased (ver. 7). This intelligence is to be regarded as a beautiful rose breaking forth among thorns (Rieger).—*And a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith.* The fulfilment of Isa. liii. 12, "I will give Him a great multitude for a spoil," this was already fulfilled at Pentecost: "and He shall have the strong for a prey," this is

fulfilled by the accession of the priests, as a prelude to the conversion of Saul.

In what manner improvements, in human things, within the Christian Church, are accomplished. 1. They arise from wants and defects which make themselves apparent. 2. The disposition and manner of acting which is required, in order that observed wants and defects might really occasion improvements: The common endeavour must be directed to obviate and prevent all disunion—all division in the common life. For this reason, in the above instance, the first endeavour was to avoid all unnecessary examination into the past, but not to abolish the order, according to which the guidance of the Church was in the hands of the apostles. Accordingly Peter, who spoke in the name of the twelve, did not withdraw with his company entirely from the business, leaving the rest to manage their own concerns as they would, nor refused to hear the complainers, nor rejected their complaints, as if they had no right to speak; but he himself, in the name of his fellow-apostles, proposed and introduced a new order in a regular manner, an order in which the complainers themselves found a position, and were called to action in order to bring about an improved condition: this spirit of discretion, self-denial, and love, in which both parties acted, brought, and it only, in every similar instance, brings blessed success (Schleiermacher).

The first disunion in the apostolic Church. 1. Its occasion. 2. Its adjustment. 3. Its blessing (Langbein).—*The choice of the deacons.* 1. Its cause (ver. 1). 2. Its accomplishment (vers. 2–6). 3. Its blessing (ver. 7) (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The choice of the deacons, a pattern of peaceful union and orderly co-operation between the ministry and the Church.* 1. The government of the Church is in the hands of the apostles; but complaints from the Church are received with brotherly love. 2. The office of the word, which pertained to them in virtue of a divine calling, remains unimpaired to the apostles; but in temporal concerns they resign without envy a portion of their power for the general good. 3. The Church selects, out of the midst of it, men of trust for the ministry of the poor; but the benediction and the consecration to their office, they receive from the hands of the apostles.—*The Church, the mother of the poor.* 1. Her motherly duty is founded, first, on the need of this poor

world in which she, as a daughter of Heaven, resides; and secondly, on the spirit of love and compassion implanted within her by her Lord and King, the divine Friend of the poor. 2. Her motherly care extends both to the bodily necessities and the spiritual wants of her wards. 3. Her motherly joy is, on earth to rescue souls from bodily degradation and spiritual wretchedness, and in heaven to stand with joy before Him who has said, Whatsoever ye have done to the least of these My brethren, ye have done to Me.—*The poor are the treasures of the Church.* 1. They stir up its spiritual gifts. 2. They exercise its brotherly love. 3. They are its ornament before the world. 4. They bear interest to it in eternity. Compare the tradition of the martyr Laurentius, who, at the command of the Roman governor to bring out the treasures of the church, led forth the poor of the congregation.—*The ancient bond between poverty and Christianity, a blessing to both.* 1. To poverty: only in Christianity, in the kingdom of Him who became poor that we might become rich, is (*a*) the divine right of the poor recognised; and (*b*) has the Holy Ghost awakened a genuine care of the poor. 2. To Christianity: in the care of the poor, it has (*a*) from the beginning developed its most divine powers—love, compassion, patience, self-denial, contempt of death, and trust in God; and (*b*) it has proved before the world its right of existence in the world, and its power for redemption of the world. (Examples from history, application to the present.)—*The true care of the poor.* 1. Its life-strength, rooted in love to Christ. 2. It finds its object in the removal of spiritual and bodily troubles. 3. It seeks its glory in the humble ministry of the Church (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The office of an almoner, an honourable office.* 1. By virtue of its ancient institution: the oldest ecclesiastical office after the apostolic, established and consecrated by the apostles themselves. 2. By virtue of its lofty mission: the care of body and soul. 3. By virtue of its great requirements: good report, the Holy Spirit, wisdom. 4. By virtue of its precious blessing which it causes and produces. — *Wherein consist the freedom and power of a preacher in the evangelical ministry.* 1. Our strength is prayer. 2. Our authority, God's word. 3. Our activity, not our own, but the work of God (Harless).

SECTION V.

STEPHEN, ONE OF THE SEVEN, WHOSE LABOURS WERE FULL OF THE SPIRIT AND BLESSED, BEING ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY, DEFENDS HIMSELF IN A POWERFUL SPEECH, AND IS STONED IN CONSEQUENCE: HE DIES VICTORIOUS IN THE NAME OF JESUS. (CHAP. VI. 8–CHAP. VII. 60.)

A.

The Work of Stephen: Machinations and Complaints against him: he is brought before the Council and called to account.

CHAP. VI. 8–15.

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, did miracles and great signs among the people. 9 Then stood up certain of the synagogue, which is called (the synagogue) of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them who were of Cilicia and Asia, and disputed with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spake. 11 Then they instigated certain men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and led him before the council. 13 And they set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against the holy place, and the law: 14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses has delivered to us. 15 And all who sat in the council looked on him, and saw his countenance, as the countenance of an angel.

Ver. 8. Χάριτος is decidedly to be preferred to the reading πίστεως arising from ver. 5, and which has only a few unimportant testimonies for it.

Ver. 9. Ἀσίας is omitted by Lachmann after A., but it is sufficiently attested to be received as genuine, and there is no internal reason against it.

Ver. 13. Βλάσφημα after ῥήματα is evidently a gloss inserted from ver. 11: the most important MSS. are against it.—Τούτου after ἁγίου is found indeed in B. and C., but yet is a spurious addition.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Stephen did miracles.*—Without doubt his calling, which led him to the poor, the suffering, and the sick, afforded him the opportunity. This gives us an insight into his practical and highly blessed ministry. That he with his companions in office ministered indefatigably and faithfully to the widows and orphans,

the poor, the suffering, and the sick, may certainly be taken for granted. But how often would Stephen see troubles for which assistance with earthly gifts, of which he was the distributor in the name of the Church, seemed completely insufficient! And, as a man full of faith and of the Spirit, he came among them not merely with earthly aid, but with spiritual powers in supplication, prayer, and faith, comforting, strengthening, and helping them; and the Lord gave him grace to perform miracles, especially to the sick and suffering. To refer χάρις to men, as indicating that Stephen enjoyed the popular favour fails entirely, because nothing in this sense is added.

2. *Then rose up certain and disputed with Stephen.*—Partly the distinction of Stephen by his deeds and miracles, and partly his eminent gifts of knowledge and eloquence, with which he testified and enlisted for Jesus, drew the attention and excited the envy and jealousy of the unbelieving Jews. They were stirred up, they drew near, they engaged in conversations and disputations (συζητοῦντες) with him. These were especially the Hellenistic Jews, who besides were acquainted with Stephen, as he also very probably belonged to the Hellenists. The expression in ver. 9 is ambiguous, and hence numerous interpretations have been proposed. Some interpreters, as Calvin and Bengel, imagine that there was only one synagogue, to which all mentioned by name in this list belonged: this rests on pressing the phrase τῆς συναγωγῆς, according to which, certainly, only one synagogue appears to be named. But the words καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ Κιλ., etc., evidently draw attention to a chief distinction; and accordingly Winer, the Biblical Dictionary (Libertines), and Ewald imagine that there were two different synagogues, the one in which the Libertines, Cyrenian, and Alexandrian Jews assembled, and the other the synagogue of the Cilician and Asiatic Jews. Winer, however, in another place (see Cyrene) supposes that the Cyrenian Jews had a separate synagogue. Nevertheless it appears as if five different synagogues were meant; for we learn from the Talmud that there was a very great number of synagogues in Jerusalem: the Rabbins name 480, and among these there is expressly mentioned the synagogue of those from Alexandria, a city where the number of Jews at that time amounted to 100,000. So also it is highly probable that the Jews of Cyrene in Upper Lybia, where they constituted a fourth part of the population,

had a synagogue of their own in the holy city. And with regard to the Libertines, or those Jews and their descendants who about B.C. 63 were carried captive by Pompey to Rome, and afterwards set at liberty and returned (to omit other explanations of the name founded on conjecture), it cannot be doubtful, according to the text, that they also possessed a synagogue. So also it is probable that both the Jews of the Asiatic province of Cilicia, and of Asia, *i.e.*, the western coast of anterior Asia, had each an independent synagogue. According to this, then the opponents of Stephen were from five separate synagogues, who yet (ver. 9) are arranged into two groups—those of Romish and African descent and those of Asia Minor. To the latter group, and in particular to the Cilician synagogue, it is probable that Saul belonged.

3. *They were not able to resist:* that is, not that they gave in as vanquished and submitted to the truth, for they only proceeded in a more hostile manner against Stephen; but they were not able to oppose anything superior, or equal, to the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke. *Σοφία* here is certainly not mere Jewish learning—learning and wisdom being in themselves two different things,—but true wisdom from above, and the fulness of the Spirit as, according to ver. 5, it resided in Stephen.

4. *Then they instigated certain men.*—In order to destroy the man whose principles they were not able to refute, these fanatics of the Hellenistic synagogues adopted the method of craft, and substituted (*ὑπέβαλον*) in place of themselves (in order not to betray the motive of personal revenge) others who, at their instigation, made and spread abroad to the utmost of their power the assertion, that Stephen had uttered blasphemies against Moses, and even against God, and that they were witnesses that he had done so. These reports were calculated, on the one hand, to excite the public opinion against Stephen, and, on the other hand, to cause the rulers of the people of Israel officially to interfere. Both objects succeeded. The people were stirred up (*συνεκίνησαν*), together with the members of the Sanhedrim; and this was the first time that the populace of the capital took up a hostile position against the Christians,—a fact forming an epoch.

5. *Then they came upon him, and caught him.*—The heads of the Sanhedrim do not take the initiative, as they did against

Jesus Himself. But the matter came at first before them only in the form of a popular movement. Yet so that the party who at first arose disputing with Stephen, and who, by means of a third hand, had spread abroad the accusations against him which excited the people, took the lead. These men came upon him suddenly, perhaps whilst Stephen went along the streets in his vocation, forcibly secured his person, and led him before the Sanhedrim, which was hastily collected together to an extraordinary sitting.

6. *They set up false witnesses.*—These witnesses were prepared, instructed, and perhaps bribed by the same party who had taken the affair into its own hands. Were they out and out false witnesses (ψευδεῖς)? Baur and Zeller deny it, and accuse the historian of an untruth, inasmuch as he calls the witnesses ψευδεῖς, for Stephen had in point of fact thus thought and spoken, as it is reported of him in ver. 13. But the speech itself (chap. vii.) affords certainly no reason to maintain this; and it is not supposable that at that time such a pious Jewish Christian as Stephen was, such an esteemed member enjoying the general confidence of the primitive Church, which faithfully adhered to the temple and the law, would be engaged in so determined an opposition to the law and the temple, as we must in this case suppose. Besides, let the connection between vers. 13 and 14 be carefully attended to. There is a great difference between them. Ver. 13 taken precisely is the general accusation; ver. 14 is the proof of it in a testimony concerning certain definite expressions of the accused. The accusation (ver. 13) is, that Stephen unceasingly (οὐ παύεται) attacked the temple and the law, that is, that he made it his chief business to attack the Mosaic religion, and that in an offensive, rebellious, and blasphemous manner; for although βλάσφημα after ῥήματα is spurious, yet, according to the context and the usage of the language, ῥήματα λαλεῖν κατὰ must indicate the special idea of slanderous and blasphemous speech. This accusation would evidently represent Stephen as a man, the leading trait of whose disposition and conduct was a fanatical opposition to everything which was most sacred to every pious Jew,—as a man who unceasingly and without any respect attacked what was sacred. Now that Stephen was a man of such a character, no one believes, not even Baur and Zeller. But those accusers wished to make it be believed.

And therefore they certainly were false witnesses: not only because they have reported an actual saying of Stephen with an evil intention in order to destroy him (Heinrichs): there was not merely positive ill-will, an evil intention, but really also a ψεῦδος; because the evidence for the above accusation, which the accusers as alleged witnesses (ἀκηκόαμεν—λέγοντες) bring forward, does not prove that which it ought to prove. Not to mention that the witnesses had probably heard this saying (which doubtless may have been said in the course of the controversy with the members of the synagogues) perhaps not with their own ears, but had received it at second hand, and which would convert their evidence into false testimony: this declaration (ver. 14), supposing that it was uttered in the same words, is, 1. only a single declaration, and proves by no means a constant and unceasing attack by Stephen; and, 2. it is at all events expressed not in a detracting form, attacking and blaspheming what was sacred, as from ver. 13 is to be expected. It is admitted that the accusation was not altogether baseless and invented, but that it rested upon an actual fact; but it was false, because the actual expressions of Stephen were taken out of their connection, distorted, and glaringly exaggerated. It is evident that the words ὁ Ναζωραῖος οὗτος, which betray a bitter and contemptuous spirit, were not uttered by Stephen, but were only blended by the false witnesses with the words of Stephen; which besides are given not in the direct, but in the indirect form of speech.

7. *And they saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel.* —The eyes of all the assembly were attentively directed to the Christian, lying under such a heavy accusation. But when they looked on him, they found in his appearance neither anguish and fear, nor any excitement produced by the intrigues practised upon him and the enmity shown to him: on the contrary, they saw his face lighted up in an angelic manner; not only animated by an expression of manly courage, victorious inspiration, and holy calmness of spirit, but also illuminated by a supernatural light. Assuredly the expression of Luke is intended not merely to import that Stephen exhibited such perfect composure of soul, that it involuntarily inspired the beholders with respect (Kuinoel), but to describe an external, and indeed an extraordinary appearance. If Stephen was already before this endowed with the Holy Ghost, then certainly, in this decisive moment, a rich

anointing of the Spirit of God would fall to his share. And that this shone outwardly from within, and that the countenance of this pious witness was transfigured with a heavenly light, visible even to his enemies, cannot appear surprising, when we consider how intimately the spiritual and the corporeal are connected together, and particularly, that in the holiest moments of life, as in the history of the end, "corporeality is the end of the ways of God."[1]

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Stephen was, in the first place, appointed to the care of the poor, and to bestow external aid; but he worked spiritually in his office. This proves, that where the Redeemer rules personally with His Spirit and gifts, and the Church adheres to Him with faith and love, and draws from Him by prayer and supplication, there all things will be directed spiritually—there also will external service transform itself into a spiritual office. On the other hand, where the Church is sickly and inwardly diseased, where it is wanting in the hidden life with Christ in God, there even the spiritual office degenerates into an external and mechanical service, into an *opus operatum* and manual labour.

2. Stephen was one of the seven, not one of the twelve: he occupied only the office of management (which at a later

[1] On this passage Professor Lechler has favoured the translator with the following explanatory remark:—"At that moment not only the soul of Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost, but also his countenance shone with a miraculous light, the focus of which was in the soul. That this was the case I have no doubt, because the soul and the body do generally clasp into each other and harmonize. The last clause, 'Leiblichkeit das Ende der Wege Gottes,' is a main thought of the Suabian theologian Oetinger in the eighteenth century. He means, that all the revelations and deeds of God find their last fulfilment in the resurrection of the body; that, according to Rom. viii. 21–23, the visible creation will be glorified: in other words, Oetinger intends to say, that all the counsels and deeds of God finally result in the calling into existence and the establishment not only of a blessed world of spirits, but also of a glorified corporeality, ruled over by the Holy Ghost. And I add, that not only in the history of the end, that is to say, in the last things of the world—in the resurrection, judgment, new heavens and new earth,—but also even in this life, namely, in the holiest moments of it, the Spirit of God impresses Himself upon the body, upon the countenance, etc., as here in the case of Stephen."

period was called the deaconate), not the apostolate. And yet it was granted to him to do signs and miracles, to speak with wisdom, and to combat victoriously the enemies of the faith, as hitherto only the apostles were able to do. Moreover he steps so much into the foreground by the gifts which the Lord bestowed on him, and the persecution which he suffered, yea, the martyr-death which he at length died, that for a time the apostles themselves appear to retire completely into the background. And yet we find no trace that the apostles regarded this with jealousy. They were not so absorbed with the idea of their office, or so occupied with the dignity of their position, as to think that it suffered detriment thereby. The Lord Himself and His honour stood higher in their eyes than their office. And the Redeemer did not so bind Himself, when He appointed the apostles to be His witnesses, as to resign His sovereign power to dispense His gifts to whom He will, to allow the Spirit to blow where He will, and to use as His instruments whom He will.

3. What the Redeemer had promised to His own, namely, that He would give them, when opposed for His sake, wisdom for speech and defence which His enemies would not be able to resist (Luke xxi. 15), was faithfully fulfilled to Stephen; so that the opponents relinquished the spiritual fight, and only, by the instigation of human passions, they attempted, through misrepresentation and falsehood, to destroy the man whose spirit and wisdom from above were superior to them.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

But Stephen (ver. 8). Stephen, a star of the first magnitude among the seven stars of the deaconate (Starke).—He that is faithful in little (the office of an almoner), to him God entrusts that which is greater (faith, powers, miracles).—One single minister, full of grace and the Spirit, does more in the Church than a hundred unspiritual ones—"Quench not the Spirit." The apostles did not prohibit preaching and the working of miracles to Stephen, although that was their peculiar office.—*Full of faith and power, did miracles and signs.* Behold the description of a living Christian! Where true faith is, there are not wanting powers; where powers are, signs do not fail, that is, works, though they are not always such splendid wonders as those of Stephen.—*Then rose certain of the synagogue and dis-*

puted with Stephen. The greatest controversialists and the subtlest disputants of religion have generally the least religion and faith (Starke). — Philosophy is not divine knowledge. "There are more things in heaven and earth than our philosophy dreams of."

And they were not able to resist (ver. 10). The disciple is not above his Master. As Christ was tempted by the scribes with the subtle questions of human wisdom, so they also threw down the gauntlet to Stephen, a man full of faith and power. Well armed with the weapons of academic learning, they seek to destroy for him the hope and glory of his heart, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Yet the plain messenger of the cross is not afraid; for he fights not with the weapons of carnal warfare, but with the Holy Spirit, by whom he speaks. They cannot obtain the victory over him (Leonh. and Spieg.).

Then they instigated certain men, and set up false witnesses (vers. 11, 13). Assistants for wicked enterprises are easily found (Starke).—There is something flexible about the truth: blind zeal can impute what is blasphemous to the witnesses of the truth, with a slight alteration in the words (Rieger).

And they stirred up the people (ver. 12). We find the people here for the first time united with the elders and scribes in enmity against the Church of Jesus. It has come to a turning-point in Jerusalem, as formerly was the case at the crucifixion of Jesus. Then the people, who had hitherto adhered to Him, exclaimed, Crucify Him (Besser).

His face as the face of an angel (ver. 15). A glad heart, which is secure of the favour of God, makes a joyful countenance (Starke).—The eagles of God mount boldest in the storm: His stars shine brightest in the black night (Hofacker).—God often gives angels to His Church, but few have eyes to see them; on the contrary, many have hands to stone them (Starke).—That the entire cheerful appearance and composed countenance of Stephen was observed, is not only a proof how gloriously God can manifest Himself in His servants, especially under sufferings, by the Spirit of glory resting upon them, but it also illustrates much in the speech of Stephen which follows: with what angelic elevation above earthly things and all respect of persons, with what zeal for God's honour and truth, and with what care for man's salvation, did he speak and act! (Rieger).

The shining countenance of Moses and the illuminated countenance of Stephen. A proof of 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8. As the ministration which by the letter killeth had glory, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit excel in glory?—*The angelic glory on Stephen's countenance.* 1. A resplendence of the countenance of Jesus Christ, who says to His own: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." 2. A radiation of the inner confidence of faith, which knows that if God be for us, who can be against us? 3. A reflection of the future glory, with which the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared.—*The glory on the countenances of departing Christians.* 1. As the glorious setting of an earthly life, ended in the peace of God. 2. As the glorious rising of an approaching eternity with its heavenly light.

On the whole section.—Stephen a man full of faith and power. 1. In his blessed activity. 2. In his fierce trial. 3. In his heavenly transfiguration.

B.

Stephen defends himself in a powerful Speech. (Chap. vii. 1–53.)

Part I. of the Speech, embracing the Time of the Patriarchs.

Chap. vii. 1–16.

1 Then spake the high priest, Are these things so? 2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was yet in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran; 3 And said unto him, Go out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I will show thee. 4 Then he went out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran; and from thence, after his father was dead, He removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. 5 And He gave him no inheritance therein, not even a foot-breadth: and He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. 6 And God spake on this wise, that his seed would be sojourners in a strange land; and they would make them servants, and entreat them evil four hundred years. 7 And the nation whom they shall serve, will I judge, said God, and afterwards they shall come forth and serve Me in this place. 8 And He gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so he begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. 9 And the patriarchs envied Joseph, and sold him into Egypt: but God was with him, 10 And rescued him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom before Pharaoh the king of Egypt, who made him governor over Egypt and over all his house.

11 But there came a famine over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. 12 But Jacob heard that there was corn, and he sent our fathers to Egypt the first time; 13 And, at the second time, Joseph became known to his brethren, and Joseph's kindred became known to Pharaoh. 14 Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, five and seventy souls. 15 And Jacob went down to Egypt, and died, he and our fathers, 16 And were removed to Sychem, and laid in the grave which Abraham bought for a sum of money of the children of Hemor, the father of Sychem.

Ver. 1. Ἄρα after εἰ is awanting in A.B.C., and therefore is omitted by Lachmann; but it is present in D.E.H. and the fathers: it would have been sooner omitted as superfluous than inserted as a correction.

Ver. 3. The article τήν before γῆν, which is awanting in the textus receptus, is fully attested, so that its genuineness is undoubted.

Ver. 5. Δοῦναι αὐτῷ is more strongly attested than αὐτῷ δοῦναι.

Ver. 11. Griesbach and Lachmann read, according to A.B.C. and some ancient versions, τὴν Αἴγυπτον; other MSS. and some versions have τὴν γῆν Αἰγύπτου:—γῆν might sooner have been omitted than inserted.

Ver. 12. Εἰς Αἴγυπτον is far better attested than ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, a correction for the sake of ὄντα.

Ver. 15. Καὶ κατέβη is better attested than κατέβη δέ. D. and some versions have no conjunction, which Bornemann and Meyer regard as the original reading; however, this supposes a connection with ἐν ψυχ. ἑβδ. πέντε (ver. 14).—Though Tischendorf erases εἰς Αἴγυπτον, yet he deviates without sufficient reason from all documents.

Ver. 16. Ὅ is a manifest correction instead of ᾧ, sufficiently critically attested and grammatically correct.—Τοῦ Συχέμ is without doubt the original reading; for both ἐν Σ., B.C. and some versions, and τοῦ ἐν Σ., A.E. and other testimonies, are evidently corrections, resting on the supposition that the name of a place, and not of a man, is here denoted.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Then spake the high priest.*—As the president of the Sanhedrim, he calls upon the accused for his defence; and as he hereby secures the right of the accused, so ἄρα, with the interjection εἰ coming before, is a word which indicates that the high priest made a show of justice.

2. *And he said.*—Stephen, whom we may conceive to be a Hellenist, delivered this speech (concerning its aim and genuineness, see below), according to all appearance, in the Greek language. As this was to be expected beforehand from his descent and education, so also the circumstance that the entire colouring of the speech corresponds with the Alexandrian translation is an argument for it. Besides the Greek language, according to his-

torical documents, was at that time much spread and current in Palestine, so that even in the Sanhedrim a speech delivered in that language was nothing extraordinary.—The address ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατέρες was conciliatory, by the expression of respect to the members of the council as fathers, and by the assertion of their common nationality.

3. *The God of glory.*—There was good reason for Stephen commencing his speech in the name of God. He thus, in opposition to the current slander that he blasphemed God, and to the implied notion that Christians were wanting in respect to God, not only testifies his deep respect for God, and gives to God the honour due to Him; but he has also a positive reason for asserting the glory of God. Here already, as in the subsequent course of his speech, he keeps in view the unlimited greatness, authority, and sovereignty of God, according to which God is bound to nothing and to no one, and can manifest Himself to whom, and how, and where He pleases. The expression in connection with ὤφθη brings to their remembrance the sublime and elevating glory, in which the self-manifestations and appearances of God were wont to take place.

4. *Before he dwelt in Haran.*—Abraham with his father Terah journeyed from Ur in Chaldea, a district probably to be sought for in the north-east of that country, to Haran, called by the Romans Carra, an ancient city, situated about the middle of Mesopotamia, at an old highway. According to the Mosaic narrative, Terah, with his son Abraham, along with Sarah and Lot, removed from Ur, in order to journey to the land of Canaan, and came with them to Haran, where he remained until his death (Gen. xi.). The word of God to Abraham, with the command to leave his country and his kindred, and to go into the land which God would show him, with the promise of the divine blessing, is first related in Gen. xii. It certainly appears as if the revelation of God, with the injunction to journey to a land which He would show him, was not earlier made to Abraham than in Haran. But Stephen here transfers this revelation to Mesopotamia (ver. 2), or to the land of the Chaldeans (ver. 4), that is, to Ur in Chaldea, and he places it in point of time before the first journey of the family, which in the first place went to the city Haran. And, indeed, in ver. 3 exactly those words are used, only a little abridged, which occur in

Gen. xii. Therefore many interpreters (as Grotius, De Wette, Meyer) maintain that Stephen committed involuntarily a mistake, perhaps in the excitement of the moment, in referring the command of God, which was only given to Abraham at Haran, to an earlier day and to another district, namely, Ur. Although, according to our opinion, there would be nothing hazardous in admitting this, yet, on the other hand, something else must be taken into consideration. It is evident from Philo (de Abrahamo) and from Josephus (Ant. 1, 7, 1), that the Jews of that age, and especially the Alexandrian Jews, were accustomed to suppose a command of God already given to Abraham in Ur. And Stephen conforms to this tradition, whilst he applies the words of Moses (Gen. xii. 1) to the alleged earlier call of God. And there are, in fact, not wanting traces in Genesis itself, which indicate that already in Ur a command of God of this kind was given to Abraham. In Gen. xv. 7, God says to Abraham, "I am Jehovah, who brought thee out of Ur in Chaldea, to give thee this land;" which seems as if God had expressly made known His will to Abraham, that he should forsake Ur: and to this place specially does Neh. ix. 7 refer. Although, then, there is in Gen. xi. 31 no intimation of a command of God, and the journey out of Ur appears rather as a voluntary act of Terah than as an act of Abraham in obedience to the will of God: yet we must consider the nature of the book of Genesis, which is evidently founded on several documents and narratives, originating in part from different points of view, as is the case, for example, with chap. xi. and chap. xii. Therefore the idea of the later Jews, which also Stephen has appropriated, must not be absolutely condemned as erroneous and unhistorical; on the contrary, it is to be conceded that the traditional view is not destitute of support in the biblical narrative.

5. *After his father was dead.*—Stephen also on this point follows the opinion prevalent at the time, as is demonstrable from Philo, which opinion scarcely rested on the supposition that filial piety would not permit Abraham to forsake his father and to go away from him during his lifetime; but the section, Gen. xi. 31–xii. 5, consistent as a united and consecutive narrative, led naturally to the inference that Abraham, only after his father's death, received the command to journey to Canaan. But certainly the chronological statements prove

that Terah was yet alive when Abraham removed from Haran. For, according to Gen. xi. 26, Terah was seventy years old when he begat Abraham, Nahor, and Haran, which doubtless is to be referred at least to the year of Abraham's birth; and according to Gen. xi. 32, Terah was two hundred and five years old when he died: but Abraham was only seventy-five years old (Gen. xii. 4) when he journeyed from Haran; consequently Terah must have lived, after Abraham's departure from Haran, sixty years in that place: also the expression מִבֵּיתְ אָבִיךָ, Gen. xii. 1, seems to indicate that Terah was still living when Abraham received that command. Stephen then followed here also a chronological tradition which indeed, at first sight, appears correct from the passage Gen. xi. 31–xii. 5, but which, considered attentively, is erroneous. And this must be simply granted, for all attempts at reconciliation have wholly failed, and are besides needless. It is purely fanciful to suppose (Bengel and others) that Abraham indeed came into Canaan in the lifetime of Terah, but yet had his home in Haran, and that it was only after his father's death that he broke entirely away from Haran, and took his permanent residence in Canaan. And equally groundless is the interpretation (Luger "On the Design of Stephen's Speech," Olshausen, Stier) that Stephen intended that after the spiritual death of Terah, that is, after he had apostatized into idolatry, Abraham left Haran; for how can *ἀποθανεῖν*, without any explanatory clause, and without the context in any wise leading to it, have such a meaning? And it is not proved that this was the common opinion at the time of the apostles; at least it is erroneous to say that Philo subscribes to this opinion: it is for the first time found in the Talmud as a solution for a chronological difficulty. Baumgarten thinks that ver. 4 would only indicate that, for the commencement of a new relation which God designed to form with the human race, not Abraham in union with Terah, but Abraham as separate from Terah, would be taken into consideration. (Baumgarten on the Acts, English translation, p. 148.) But in order to express this thought, Stephen would have been obliged to give a wholly different turn to his discourse: and thus anything might be made out of it. But to what purpose so much ingenuity? Why not grant that Stephen followed the opinion of his contemporaries, which the text of the sacred history at first sight

suggests, but which a more exact investigation proves to be erroneous? Though Stephen erred in a question of time, yet this prejudices neither his wisdom nor his fulness of the Spirit.

6. *And gave him no inheritance therein:* κληρονομία, heritable property. That Abraham (Gen. xxiii.) purchased a field with a cave from Hemor, does not contradict this; for this very circumstance, that Abraham required to purchase the field, establishes the fact that he possessed no inheritance as a divine gift. The opinion that Stephen here speaks only of the first period of the Palestinean residence of Abraham, and that the purchase happened later, after the institution of circumcision (Meyer), does not suffice, because this distinction of two periods is merely imputed to the text, without its being indicated, or any stress being laid upon it. The bestowal of the promise as regards the land, before Abraham had a son, is brought forward, inasmuch as it was thereby indicated that both the inheritance and the possession of an heir depended solely on God, and was God's free gift.

7. *But God spake thus.*—Stephen gives the prophecy from Gen. xv. 13, chiefly according to the Alexandrian version, yet with some deviation, stating what is there in the direct form of speech at first in the indirect form, and not until ver. 7, with the words εἶπεν ὁ Θεός, passing over to the direct form. Moreover he (conclusion of ver. 7) combines Ex. iii. 12 with Gen. xv. 13, uniting a promise given to Moses at Horeb, referring to the coming worship of God at that mount, with that promise given to Abraham for his posterity, and referring it to the worship to be performed in Canaan, as the free inheritance of Israel. Judged strictly according to the letter, we must certainly say, with De Wette, that this is a false reference. But who will blame Stephen that he, not pressing the mere letter nor sticking to particulars, but embracing the whole divine economy, united a promise made to Abraham with one made to Moses, and took a more enlarged view of the latter? Stephen had in view not the exact literal quotation of the words, but their free connection and application. In a similar manner the circumstance is to be judged of, that Stephen gives the duration of the Egyptian bondage as 400 years, whilst in Ex. xii. 40 430 years are reckoned. The latter, without doubt, is chronologically exact; but Stephen names a round number, and this liberty must be allowed him. Κρινῶ indicates, according to the

context, the punishment which God would inflict deservedly on the tyrants who had maltreated His people.

8. *And gave to him the covenant of circumcision.*—Διαθήκη τῆς περιτομῆς is called the covenant entered into by God with Abraham, because circumcision is not only the sign of this covenant (Gen. xvii. 11), but also is itself an essential constituent part of it (Gen. xvii. 10). The expression ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ διαθ. περιτ., instead of, He made the covenant with Abraham, appears to be chosen designedly, to indicate that the establishment of the covenant was a free act of God, yea, His free gift, and that God in His revelation was in no ways limited and conditioned by men.

9. *And the patriarchs envied Joseph.*—For the first time in this review of sacred history is human sinfulness mentioned, and that as the envy of the sons of Jacob against their brother Joseph. From jealousy and envy they put him away from themselves (ἀπέδοντο); that is, they did what they could to remove him for ever from themselves and their family, and to degrade him. But though they thrust him from them, yet God was with him: He rescued him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom before Pharaoh, that is to say, inclined Pharaoh favourably to him; and he, by the wise interpretations of dreams and by the counsels which he imparted to the king, gained Pharaoh's confidence. To refer χάριν to the favour of God (Meyer), recommends itself less than to understand it as referring to the king; for the favour of God is already indicated in ἦν ὁ Θεὸς μετ' αὐτοῦ, and the words which follow state the sensible proofs of the divine favour, and one of the proofs is that Pharaoh directed his royal favour to Joseph.

10. *Seventy-five souls.*—Stephen follows here the Septuagint, which in Gen. xlvi. 27 and Ex. i. 5 names seventy-five souls; whilst the Hebrew mentions only seventy, reckoning, moreover, Joseph and his two sons. The Septuagint, on the other hand, in the first passage reckons no fewer than nine sons of Joseph.

11. *And were removed to Sychem.*—The subject of μετετέθησαν is αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν (ver. 15). Stephen here states that the bones both of Jacob and of his sons were removed to Sychem. Here again some difficulties, taking the words strictly, arise. 1. According to Gen. l. 13, Joseph and his brethren buried Jacob's body in the cave of the field at Hebron,

whilst Stephen states that Jacob was removed to Sychem. 2. According to Josh. xxiv. 32, the Israelites, on taking possession of Canaan, brought indeed Joseph's bones with them out of Egypt and buried them in Sychem, but nothing similar is said in the Old Testament of the remains of Joseph's brethren, to whom the expression in our passage refers. 3. Stephen says of the field of Sychem, that Abraham purchased it of the sons of Hemor, the father of Sychem (to τοῦ Συχέμ, not υἱοῦ, but πατρός is to be supplied): whereas, in point of fact, it was not Abraham, but Jacob who purchased this field for his possession (Gen. xxxiii. 19), which Stephen here mistook for the field at Hebron which Abraham bought. Every possible method has been attempted, from the time of the old manuscripts (of which one, instead of ὁ Ἀβραάμ, reads ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν, in order to get rid of the last difference) down to the time of the Reformers and the most modern interpreters, to remove these discrepancies. It has been attempted critically, grammatically, lexicographically, and hermeneutically, to show how the combination of the abridged accounts of the two burials and the two purchases intentionally occurred in the passage. But we act best if we frankly admit, that in reference to the purchase and to the burial of Jacob, there is a mistake which, in a speech directed to an entirely different object, might easily take place. The reference to Joseph's brethren, as to whose burial in Canaan the Old Testament does not contradict the statement of Stephen, but is only silent, is probably to be ascribed to a tradition at that time already current (which at least certainly existed at a later period), and which Stephen already knew.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. God is ὁ Θεὸς τῆς δόξης.—This is a proposition which comprehends in itself an entire dogmatical view, and indicates the standpoint from which such a view sets out. All that God is and does, and how He manifests Himself, bear the stamp of His glory, that is, of His absolute greatness, power, and majesty. What He does is perfectly free, unconditioned, and unlimited by the creature. He can manifest Himself where He will: He is not confined to any space in creation, to any country, to any city, to any house (as the temple). Speculatively, this thought seems easily to arise from the idea of God as an infinite Spirit.

But man easily departs by a certain centrifugal force from this truth, and falls into the idea as if the infinite God were bound to something finite. Therefore the assertion of the idea of the absolute glory of God, in opposition to those fancied limitations of the Infinite, is ever a necessity.

2. A chief point of the sacred history which Stephen illustrates, is the life of Joseph. Doubtless the thought, more or less clear, floated before him, that Joseph was a type of Jesus. It is surprising what a multitude of great and small points of resemblance between Joseph and Jesus Christ, as regards their persons, experiences, and works, appear, when we direct attention to the subject. But especially Stephen makes it observable, that notwithstanding that his brethren persecuted and degraded him on their part, yet God was with him and exalted him.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

But he said (ver. 2). "Be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear," 1 Pet. iii. 5.—*Brethren and fathers.* Thus he addresses them in a friendly and respectful manner, with meekness and fear; not with carnal zeal or spiritual pride, although they had shown to him a wretched fraternal and paternal love.—*The God of glory, etc.* A servant of God should apply himself more to justify God's conduct than his own (Quesnel). —*God, as the God of glory, proved in the government of His chosen people from of old,* in so far as He shows therein, 1. His unlimited power; 2. His free grace; 3. His wisdom, leading everything to a glorious end.

Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred (ver. 3). Self-denial especially belongs to faith in God (Starke).—Every Christian must go out with Abraham, forsake the world's friendship and all comfort in the creature, and cleave to God with love and confidence.

Then came he out—and from thence (ver. 4). The life of believers is a constant pilgrimage—a new departure from each resting-place, until his entrance into the true Canaan.—*And gave him no inheritance therein* (ver. 5). The earth is not the inheritance of God's children; their lot is not in this world; they are here only lodgers (Quesnel).—He to whom God is all, has possession enough, though he possesses not a foot-breadth.—

And He promised that He would give it. Faith has its inheritance in the invisible world, and possesses the future already in the present, Heb. xi. 1.

His seed should be sojourners (ver. 6). God gave the promise to him thus, in order that faith might have something hard to digest. To the cordial of the promise, He adds the tribulation, Rom. viii. 17 (Starke).—*The nation whom they shall serve, will I judge* (ver. 7). God has His time to humble His people, but also His time to judge the instruments of such humiliation. When He has used out His rod, He casts it into the fire: when He has swept His brooms done, they themselves are converted into sweepings.—*And serve Me in this place.* Every redemption binds the redeemed to the service of their Redeemer, Luke i. 74, 75.

On vers. 2–8. *The footprints of Abraham, the father of the faithful, a shining example for all believing pilgrims.* We see in this, 1. The sacrifice and trial of faith; 2. The patience and obedience of faith; 3. The reward and blessing of faith.—*Abraham's pilgrimage.* 1. His rugged pilgrim's path. 2. His good pilgrim's staff. 3. His blessed pilgrim's aim.

The patriarchs envied Joseph (ver. 9). Piety has ever the hatred and envy of the world for its companions, 2 Tim. iii. 12. A man's foes shall be they of his own household, Matt. x. 36. Brethren have one blood, but seldom one spirit.—*God gave him favour and wisdom* (ver. 10). Only after and by grace, comes true wisdom (Apost. Past.).—*There came a famine* (ver. 11). Where Jesus, the true Joseph, is not, a famine of the true bread must everywhere prevail; for He only is the Bread of life (Quesnel).—*And our fathers found no sustenance.* The famine attacked the house of Abraham. Piety affords no exemption from earthly plagues and sufferings. But the sufferings of the righteous have a different issue from the plagues of the wicked, Rom. viii. 28 (Apost. Past.).

And at the second time Joseph was known (ver. 13). Joseph did not at first reveal himself to his brethren. We must wait in order to experience God's grace, Ps. cxxx. 5, 6. God often permits trouble to mount to the highest point, that He may appear the more glorious with His aid (Starke).—O that the Jews, as most of them at first knew Him not, might at the second time, in these last days, learn to know Jesus, their brother according to the flesh! (The same).

Laid in the sepulchre that Abraham purchased (ver. 16). It is no small favour of God to have our bones gathered to our fathers, and to such a place where the name of God is honoured, and where the visible church is (Starke).—"Grant to the body a small space near its parent's grave" (Hermann).

On vers. 9–16. *Joseph a type of Jesus.* 1. In his condition of humiliation. The one as well as the other his father's beloved son, but his brethren's derision and offence: the one as well as the other conscious from childhood of his future greatness, but coming to glory only through sufferings: the one as well as the other hated by his own, sold into the hands of sinners, falsely accused, unjustly condemned. 2. In his condition of exaltation. Jesus, as well as Joseph, crowned with honour after shame and suffering, placed for a blessing over a famishing people, recognised with trembling by those who once denied and persecuted Him, and rewarding with favour and kindness those who did Him evil.

Part II. of the Speech, comprehending the Mosaic Period. (Chap. vii. 17–43.)

a. Fate of Israel in Egypt, and the first part of the History of Moses.

Chap. vii. 17–29.

17 But as the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had announced to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, 18 Until another king arose, who knew not Joseph. 19 He dealt subtilely with our kindred and evil entreated our fathers, and made their little children to be exposed, in order that they might not live. 20 At which time Moses was born, and was a comely child before God: he was nourished up in his father's house three months. 21 But when he was exposed, the daughter of Pharaoh took him up, and brought him up for her own son. 22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in his words and deeds. 23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him who was ill-treated, whilst he smote the Egyptian. 25 But he thought that his brethren would understand that God by his hands would give them deliverance; but they understood it not. 26 And the day following he appeared among them as they strove together, and urged them to peace, saying, Men, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another? 27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him from

him, saying, Who hath set thee as a ruler and judge over us? 28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday? 29 Then Moses fled at this saying, and became a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.

Ver. 17. The MSS. A.B.C. have ὡμολόγησεν; the Vulgate, *confessus erat*: thus Lachmann and Tischendorf. The reading ἐπηγγείλατο has only one important MS. in its favour; and ὤμοσεν in D.E. is, without doubt, a correction.

Ver. 18. Ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον after ἕτερος is indeed attested by A.B.C. and other less important MSS.; but yet it is more probable that it was inserted for the sake of explanation, than that it should have been omitted in D.E.H. by mistake.

Ver. 21. The reading ἐκτεθέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ, received by Lachmann from A.B.C.D., probably arose from this, that αὐτόν after ἀνείλατο appeared not to agree with the preceding accusative ἐκτεθ. δ. αὐτόν.

Ver. 22. The best attested reading is ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ, A.C.E. D. and H. omit the preposition; B. has the genitive πάσης σοφίας, which is grammatically impossible; the accusative πάσαν τὴν σοφίαν has only one MS. for it.—Λόγοις καὶ ἔργοις αὐτοῦ, without ἐν and with αὐτοῦ, is fully attested.

Ver. 26. Συνήλασεν, evidently a more difficult reading than συνήλλασσεν, which is supported by B.C.D., is, without doubt, the original; it is attested by A.E.H. and accepted by Tischendorf.

Ver. 27. The genitive ἐφ' ἡμῶν has more testimonies in its favour than the accusative ἐφ' ἡμᾶς.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *As the time of the promise drew nigh.*—Καθώς is to be taken literally, not = *quum;* but as, in proportion as the time drew nigh, so also the increase of the people proceeded. The ἐπαγγελία of God is that recorded in Gen. xv. 13, 14, and mentioned by Stephen in ver. 6.

2. *Until another king arose.*—This is entirely taken from Ex. i. 8. What is there called חָדָשׁ is here expressed by ἕτερος, which denotes, in distinction from ἄλλος, another kind of king, and points to a new dynasty. *Οὐκ ᾔδει τὸν Ἰωσήφ*, as also in the Hebrew, indicates not only unwillingness to recognise Joseph and disregard of his services for Egypt, but also a complete want of acquaintance with them. A lapse of four hundred years, taken in connection with the commencement of a new dynasty, probably sprung from a different part of the country, makes an actual want of knowledge of Joseph perfectly comprehensible.

3. *The same dealt subtilely.*—Κατασοφίσασθαι is the translation of הִתְחַכְּמָה, Ex. i. 10, in the Septuagint. Τοῦ ποιεῖν

ἔκθετα τὰ βρέφη, Meyer understands as a pure construction (the infinitive) of purpose: he evil entreated them, in order to compel by this the exposure of their children. This is incorrect. It is grammatically unnecessary, and suits not the context: κακοῦν, with the imposed burdens and hard treatment, had not the design, and could not have had it, to cause them to expose their children. This construction of the infinitive (τοῦ ποιεῖν), which originally expressed a purpose, is in unclassical Greek, especially with the Hellenists, the Septuagint, and in the New Testament with Paul and Luke, frequently used (Winer's Grammar); and with these writers the definite reference to the purpose often passes over into the reference to the result. Accordingly the expression only affirms: he evil entreated them, so that he (among other things) made their newly-born children to be exposed. The fact to which this refers is the command of Pharaoh, given to the Egyptians in general, that they should cast the new-born male children of the Israelites into the Nile. The Septuagint uses the verb ζωογονεῖν, Ex. i. 17, for חִיָּה, to preserve in life, to let live; so also it is used here.

4. *A comely child before God.*—Ex. ii. 2 relates only of the mother of Moses: וַתֵּרֶא אֹתוֹ כִּי טוֹב הוּא. Stephen says, ἀστεῖος τῷ Θεῷ, comely before God, according to God's judgment, so that God Himself recognised it. The expression is not to be understood as a superlative. Besides, it is very moderate, compared to what tradition says of the beauty of Moses as a child. Philo speaks of it, but still more Josephus, who, in Ant. ii. 9, 7, calls him a child of a divine form, μορφῇ θεῶν; and relates that when he was carried along the streets, all were astonished, and remained standing full of admiration, each forgetting his most pressing business, etc.

5. *The daughter of Pharaoh took him up.*—Ἀνείλατο is not so much as *tollere infantem* (De Wette), as it never occurs in that sense; but simply equal to וַתִּקָּחֶהָ (Ex. ii. 5), lifted him up. The idea of adoption is first contained in ἑαυτῇ εἰς υἱόν, although literally it is only said, she brought him up for herself (instead of for his real parents), to be her son, that is, that he should become her son.

6. *Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*—Neither the Pentateuch nor any other passage of the Old Testament mentions this. However, it is not in the least degree

improbable that Moses, when he had the king's daughter for his motherly protectress, would also receive the complete instruction which the Egyptians knew and valued, and which, according to various testimonies, appears to have related chiefly to mathematics, physics, and medicine. It is otherwise related by Philo, who, in his life of Moses, mentions that Moses had not only Egyptian, but also Greek, Assyrian, and Chaldaic instructors. *Δυνατὸς ἐν λόγοις καὶ ἔργοις αὐτοῦ* forcibly reminds us of Luke xxiv. 19, where it is said of Jesus that He was *δυνατὸς ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ*. The *ἔργα* of Moses are not to be referred to miracles, of which the Scripture at this period of his life mentions nothing, but only to his active appearances and works. On the other hand, *δυνατὸς ἐν λόγοις* does not in the least contradict, as is thought, what Moses said of himself (Ex. iv. 10), that he was not eloquent, but, on the contrary, slow of speech and of a slow tongue. That does not assert, as the Septuagint and the Targum of Jonathan interpret it, that he was a stammerer, but only that he had not a ready and fluent tongue. And, indeed, it often happens with men of character and intellect, that a not very fluent delivery yet operates with weight and power (*δυνατὸς ἐν λόγοις*).

7. *But when he was full forty years old.*—Both here and in vers. 30 and 36, Stephen draws attention to the three periods of forty years, into which the life of Moses is divided. However established by custom this symmetrical division has become, it is not in any wise positively founded on the Pentateuch itself. Only two numbers are given in the original: the one the whole age of Moses, 120 years (Deut. xxxiv. 7); and the other the forty years' residence with the people in the wilderness, partly indirectly as regards the people (Ex. xvi. 35; Deut. xiv. 33; compare chap. xxxiii. 38), and partly directly as regards Moses, whose age when he stood before Pharaoh is given at eighty years. On the other hand, there is no precise determination, either of the time which Moses spent in the land of his birth before his flight from Egypt, or of the duration of his residence in the wilderness before his calling at Horeb. The more exact determination of this period, and the whole proportional division of the period of Moses' life, are derived entirely from a tradition, which is here first mentioned, and indeed fully carried out, but which also is current among the Rabbins. The expres-

sion *ἀνέβη εἰς τὴν καρδίαν*, impersonal, a complete Hebraism = עָלְתָה עַל לֵב, proceeds from the idea of a height and depth in the human soul: something may lie deep down in the soul: there it is latent;—it rises up, emerges and steps into clear and conscious life, into feeling and impulse: then only it becomes the property of consciousness, and leads to an independent and free action. Whilst in Ex. ii. 11 the fact is related entirely objectively, that Moses went out unto his brethren and beheld their burdens, Stephen describes the circumstance subjectively, that the feeling of sympathy and love preceded, from which the resolution was formed: "he thought of visiting his brethren."

8. *He thought his brethren would understand.*—A remark of the speaker which is not indicated in the original Hebrew. Stephen understood this act, by which Moses stood up for an individual Israelite and slew an individual Egyptian, as intimating and predicting the deliverance of the entire people from Egyptian bondage, which God would effect by Moses. His people should have observed this, but they understood it not. This *οὐ συνιέναι*, Stephen moreover seems to trace, not chiefly to a want in the understanding and power of comprehension, but especially to a want of good-will, faith, trust in God, and hope.

9. *On the following day he appeared among them.*—Here also the peculiarity and freshness of the historical view appear. *Ὤφθη* is remarkable; it sounds almost as of a divine appearance, and doubtless indicates that Moses appeared as a messenger of God to his countrymen, not simply, as Bengel renders it, *ultro, ex improviso*, but in point of fact as sent from a higher world by God. *Συνήλασεν αὐτοὺς εἰς εἰρήνην* indicates the energetic impressiveness with which Moses persuaded his countrymen to reconciliation and peace, a *vis lenitatis*, as Bengel expresses it. To replace the word by *συνήλλασσεν*, as some cursive MSS. do, or to conceive it only as an attempt, is incorrect. Moses, on his part, strove to bring the contending parties to peace; that the one resisted and drove the reconciler from him, is only said in ver. 27. Also the address is freely rendered. In Ex. ii. 13, the words of Moses are given shortly: "Wherefore smitest thou thy brother?" but here Moses turns himself to both, and earnestly represents that they are brethren, and should act in a brotherly manner toward each other.

10. *Became a stranger.*—According to the Arabian geographers of the middle ages, who mention a city Madian eastward of the Elanitic Gulf, the land of Midian is to be sought for between the north part of the Arabian Gulf and Arabia Felix, toward Moab. Perhaps the Midianites under Jethro were a nomadic horde, who roamed about the Arabian desert (Winer's Dictionary).

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. It is not expressly intimated, but the whole context, as well as the object of this defence, leads to the inference, that Moses is contemplated as a type of Jesus Christ. The slanderers and accusers had calumniated Stephen as a blasphemer of Moses and a despiser of the Mosaic law. Stephen treats amply of Moses; yet he considers him not as a lawgiver, but as a divinely sent deliverer and head of the people, to whom trust and obedience were due. Accordingly he dwells partly on the wonderful, and by man completely unexpected, divine guidance and preparation of Moses for his call, and partly on the behaviour of men, and especially of his own people, toward him. They understood not that God would send to them deliverance by him, for they would not understand it; moral devotedness and willing attention to the intimation of God were awanting to them. The perfect fitness of Jesus as our Redeemer cannot produce faith and obedience toward Him, where there is wanting a willingness of heart to be reconciled to the ways of God, and to attend to His sovereign saving will.

2. As the Israelites retorted the question to Moses, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" so the members of the Sanhedrim asked Jesus, "Who gave Thee this authority?" (Matt. xxi. 23, compare Luke xx. 2.) The divine authority is here called in question because the human authorization is not at once perceptible. In other words, we involuntarily think that God in His government is restricted by human forms and bounds, and deny the absolute authority of God (ὁ Θεὸς τῆς δόξης).

For the Homiletical Hints, see below.

b. Moses' Call.

Chap. vii. 30–34.

30 And after forty years were fulfilled, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 But when Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight. And as he drew nigh to behold it, a voice of the Lord occurred: 32 I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. Then Moses trembled and durst not behold. 33 But the Lord said to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground. 34 I have indeed seen the ill-treatment of My people in Egypt, and I have heard their sighing, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I send thee to Egypt.

Ver. 30. The external testimonies waver between the reading ἄγγελος and ἄγγελος κυρίου: A.B.C. have the former, D.E.H. the latter, whilst the versions are divided. Κυρίου would hardly have been omitted, if originally there; whereas, it might easily have been added in conformity with the original text of the Hebrew and the LXX. Therefore Lachmann and Tischendorf properly omit κυρίου.—Tischendorf reads πυρὶ φλογός instead of φλογὶ πυρός. Both readings are nearly equally well attested; even in the LXX., Ex. iii. 2: the latter is the more simple, and therefore suspicious.

Ver. 31. Ἐθαύμαζεν, D.E.H., is to be preferred to the aorist ἐθαύμασεν, A.B.C. The imperfect is entirely in keeping with the context.—Many MSS. have πρὸς αὐτόν after κυρίου; but as it is awanting in A.B. and several Oriental MSS., it is to be considered as a gloss.

Ver. 32. The detailed reading ὁ Θεὸς Ἀβρ. καὶ ὁ Θεὸς Ἰσ. κ. ὁ Θ. Ἰακ., in D.E.H., appears for the sake of embellishment, in contrast to the preferable reading of A.B.C., ὁ Θεὸς Ἀβρ. καὶ Ἰσ. κ. Ἰακ., adopted by Lachmann and Tischendorf.

Ver. 33. Ἐφ' ᾧ is more strongly attested than ἐν ᾧ, which has only E. and H. for it, and appears to have been inserted from the LXX. Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Meyer have therefore preferred it.

Ver. 34. The fut. ἀποστελῶ in the textus receptus is only supported by one important MS., H., whilst A.B.C.D. have the present ἀποστέλλω. Also E. reads ἀποστίλλω, which is evidently an error of the transcriber.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *After forty years were expired.*—See Exegetical Explanations to ver. 23. *The wilderness of Mount Sinai.*—The Arabian desert or the Sinaitic peninsula is here indicated by Stephen, as the place where the call of Moses occurred. That the appearance took place in the immediate neighbourhood of Mount Horeb, is not expressly said, but presumed as known; at least, the wilderness is named after Mount Sinai. In the New Testament Sinai only occurs, and not Horeb. In the Old Testament both

names are used, yet so that in the history of the giving of the law and of the residence of the Israelites at the mountain, with one exception, it is called Sinai; whilst before the arrival of the people at the precise place, and after their departure from it, the mountain is without exception called Horeb: a circumstance from which Robinson (Palestine) with reason infers, that Horeb is the general name for the whole mountain range, and that Sinai refers to the individual mountain from which the giving of the law took place.

2. *An angel.*—If the reading ἄγγελος without κυρίου is the correct one, as it appears to be, then certainly the special idea מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה finds here no support: besides, even in ἄγγελος κυρίου this is not unmistakeably expressed, because at all events, as also in the Septuagint (Ex. iii. 2), the article before ἄγγελος is awanting.—The reading πυρὶ φλογός represents the fire in the bush as a fire flaming before inspection; in the other reading φλογὶ πυρὸς, the flame of fire as such is the object represented. Both essentially amount to the same thing. The bush burning yet not consumed, in which the angel of Jehovah is present, is the place of the manifestation of God Himself. The flaming fire which did not consume the bush was not a natural fire, but a supernatural light, as it belonged to the δόξα of God in His appearance.

3. *Moses wondered.*—The narrative here also is not a slavish and literal repetition of the Old Testament account, but a free and lively translation. Thus ἐθαύμαζεν, where particularly the imperfect, as the preferable reading, gives us to understand that Moses, after the first discovery of this appearance, looked on for a while astonished before he drew near, in order to take a more exact view of the phenomenon (κατανοῆσαι).

4. *A voice of the Lord occurred.*—What the angel, as the messenger of God, says, not in his own but in God's name, is God's word, and his voice is God's voice. Here also Stephen deviates from the text of the Old Testament, inasmuch as there the self-manifestation of God as the God of the patriarchs (Ex. iii. 6) follows the command to take off his sandals, because the place was holy ground. Moses was to unloose and to take off his sandals (the under covering of his feet, fastened with straps), for in the East only barefoot must one tread temples and other holy places, as a token of deep respect, and in order not to bring dust and impurity on their shoes into the sanctuary. Rabbinical tra-

dition informs us that the priests in the temple of Jerusalem performed their ministry without shoes.

5. *I have indeed seen.*—The mode of expression ἰδὼν εἶδον is here, as well as in the Septuagint, an elegant rendering of the Hebrew verb with the infinitive absolute: moreover, a similar form is also found even among the classical writers of Greece. The emphasis, which consists in the participial repetition of the verb, indicates a long-continued and sympathising compassionate beholding.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The theological notion, that "the angel of Jehovah" who appears so often in the Old Testament, and speaks partly in the name of God Himself, is to be considered as identical with the eternal Son of God, who before His incarnation appeared in the form of an angel, finds no support in the circumstance that Stephen speaks simply only of an angel, when Ex. iii. 2 speaks of the angel of Jehovah.

2. The fear and trembling which befell Moses, as soon as he was conscious that God Himself was present and manifested Himself so near to him, was a natural feeling of a sincere and not blunted mind. It is also not without significance, that this manifestation of God took place on the same mountain which was soon to become the theatre of the giving of the law. It is true that it is not affirmed in the context that Moses was to experience a foretaste of the trembling which took place at the giving of the law; but the impression of the elevated majesty, holiness, and δόξα of God must nevertheless be alarming at first. First fear, then comfort: for the words of God, ver. 34, are nevertheless refreshing and elevating, by the love, mercy, and helping grace displayed therein (τοῦ λαοῦ μου).

3. The place, where Moses stood, was holy ground, simply because God was there present and manifested Himself. The place had not in itself any sanctity about it above any other, but simply because the absolute will of God to manifest Himself wherever He pleases converts that place into holy ground. To assert this, lies quite within the scope of Stephen's discourse. But it also corresponds to the Mosaic account of the giving of the law, in which God, as regards the places of manifestation, makes everything dependent on this, that He may set and establish the memorial of His name anywhere (Ex. xx. 21).

c. The Conduct of Israel toward Moses and toward God.

Chap. vii. 35–43.

35 This Moses, whom they denied, saying, Who has made thee a ruler and a judge? him did God send as a ruler and a deliverer, by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 This man brought them out, and did miracles and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, for the space of forty years. 37 This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, A prophet will God raise up to you of your brethren like unto me. 38 This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel, who spake with him on the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the living words to give to us; 39 To whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and in their heart turned back to Egypt, 40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; for as for this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has happened to him. 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands. 42 But God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered sacrifices and gifts to Me for the space of forty years in the wilderness? 43 And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of the god Rephan, images which ye made to worship them; and I will remove you beyond Babylon.

Ver. 35. The perfect ἀπέσταλκεν is much better attested than the aorist ἀπέστειλεν.—Σὺν χειρί is fully attested, whilst the apparently easier reading ἐν χ. has only one MS. for it.

Ver. 36. Γῆ Αἰγύπτῳ, in A.E.H. and the cursive MSS., as well as in the Greek fathers, is, without doubt, genuine; whilst τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ and γῇ Αἰγύπτου were derived from it.

Ver. 37. Lachmann and Tischendorf have preferred, after A.B.D., the shortest reading, ἀναστήσει ὁ Θεὸς ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, so that both κύριος before ὁ Θεὸς and ὑμῶν after it are omitted as insertions. So also αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε, though not weakly attested, is to be considered as spurious, as it would be sooner inserted from the Hebrew and LXX. than omitted if originally there.

Ver. 39. Τῇ καρδίᾳ is indeed found in only one MS. of first rank; but it is found in several other MSS., ancient Oriental versions, and Greek fathers. Moreover, on internal grounds it is to be preferred both to the reading ταῖς καρδίαις and to ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις. So Tischendorf.

Ver. 43. Without doubt the correct reading is θεοῦ without ὑμῶν, which indeed is awanting only in B. and D., but was probably inserted to suit the LXX. in Amos v. 26.—The manner of writing Rephan is very various: almost each of the chief MSS. have a different form. Lachmann and Tischendorf have adopted Ῥεφάν.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

1. *This Moses whom they denied.*—It must strike every reader that the four verses (35–38) all begin with the demonstrative pronoun, whilst also the second half of ver. 35 begins with τοῦτον, whereas in ver. 38 the relative is repeated in a similar manner. A rhetorical emphasis unmistakeably lies in this repeated and forcible pointing to the person of Moses. And indeed the intention of this emphasis is especially to be sought in the contrast which the divine call and commission of Moses form to the denial and rejection which he experienced from his people. In two ways is this contrast represented to us: (*a*) Ver. 35: The earlier rejection of Moses by his countrymen, contrasted with his later divine mission as a deliverer and liberator of his people by many miracles. (*b*) Vers. 37–39: The honour adjudged to Moses by God, that he, by means of his intercourse with the angel, became mediator of the revelation of God to the people, and forerunner of the promised Prophet, contrasted with the disobedience of the Israelites, who turned from him, and ignored him as one who had passed away.

2. Ver. 35 places in contrast the earlier disposition of the Israelites toward Moses with his later mission and miraculous works,—the guidance of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness. But this contrast only appears when (as Stephen actually does) the saying of that Israelite (Ex. ii. 13) is regarded as the saying of all. The plural ἠρνήσαντο εἰπόντες has the import that what one said was spoken as by many, or at least as expressing the feeling common to all: for unius hominis dicta et facta adscribuntur etiam illis, qui eodem sunt animo (Bengel).

3. The two sentences separately form the contrast: 1. *Τίς σε κατέστησεν ἄρχοντα καὶ δικαστήν*; 2. *Ὁ Θεὸς ἀπέσταλκεν αὐτὸν ἄρχοντα καὶ λυτρωτήν*. The first sentence contains the human question (of unbelief and rejection); the latter the divine answer which was given to it by the act of God. But whilst God sent him whose calling as ἄρχων was questioned certainly as a ruler and a guide, He sent him not only as δικαστήν, which was questioned, but as λυτρωτήν, which is more. There is here a climax. The authority of Moses to judge between two men was questioned; but God sent him as the deliverer of the entire

people, and as it were an arbiter and executor between two nations. *Σὺν χειρὶ ἀγγέλου*, literally with the hand, that is, with the assisting power of the angel: indicating that Moses, by intercourse with the angel of God, and by the angel's mighty power, was declared to be the ambassador of God.

4. *This is that Moses* (vers. 37–39).—The second contrast, analogous to the first, is here brought forward; but here the first member of the sentence is the divine, and the second the human contrast, which was in the former contrast the reverse. God has honoured Moses to be a prophet, a mediator of the divine revelations: the Israelites would not hearken to him, but turned from him, and in their hearts turned back again to Egypt. Ver. 37 represents the dignity of Moses: the favour directed toward him by God, that the Prophet promised by God, the Messiah, should be a prophet like unto Moses (*ὡς ἐμέ*). Ver. 38 makes plain the prophetical position of Moses, describing his mediation in the giving of the law. Moses was in the congregation (*ἐκκλησία*, the assembly of the people) with the angel and with our fathers; that is to say, his calling, work, and position were related on the one side to the angel, and on the other side to the people, receiving in the one case, and giving in the other (*ἐδέξατο—δοῦναι*). Thus Moses stood in the middle, and was the mediator between God and the people. The angel spake with him on Mount Sinai. What is in Exodus directly ascribed to Jehovah, Stephen, with the Alexandrians and Philo, understands as done by the medium of angels.—The law itself Stephen describes as *λόγια ζῶντα*, divine sayings, oracles which are not dead letters, but living and operative (see Dogmatical and Ethical Thoughts, No. 3). Stephen was accused of speaking against the law, of blaspheming Moses: here he praises the law, he acknowledges himself as a reverer of it, he sets a high value upon it.

5. *But thrust him from them.*—Notwithstanding that Moses was so highly honoured and exalted by God, his countrymen were unwilling to submit themselves obediently to his guidance (*ὑπήκοοι γενέσθαι*); on the contrary, they thrust him from them (*ἀπώσαντο*, as in ver. 27 *ἀπώσατο αὐτόν*), and in their hearts turned back again to Egypt. To what does this refer? On account of vers. 40 and 41, the common opinion, which all the moderns embrace, is that it refers entirely to the Egyptian

idolatry. But it is remarkable that neither in these two verses is it anywhere indicated by a single word that the golden calf was the imitation of an Egyptian idol, nor is there to be found anywhere in the Old Testament, either in the Pentateuch or the later books (Ezek. xx. 7 not excepted), an express intimation that this image of a calf in the Arabian desert was a reminiscence of Egypt. It was no doubt so in point of fact, but this is nowhere asserted either in this passage or in the Old Testament. There is then no sufficient reason to refer the disposition of the Israelites to turn back to Egypt, chiefly or exclusively to the Egyptian idolatry. We are rather to think of the longing, arising within them and frequently expressing itself, after Egypt and its food, and the whole mode of life to which they had been there accustomed (Num. xi. 5).

6. *Make us gods to go before us.*—This must by no means be understood, as Meyer remarks, that the gods should go before them in their return, provided we should think in ver. 39 of home-sickness toward Egypt. For Stephen had in view the turbulent longing after Egypt only as a symptom, in which the revolt of the people from Moses and his guidance displayed itself. But here (ver. 40) he confines himself simply to the words of the history (Ex. xxxii.),—a history which likewise affords a striking proof of the disposition of the people averted from Moses. There is here, and certainly in the Hebrew, no direct trace visible that the people wanted forthwith to return, and under the guidance of the image to journey to Egypt. Bengel understands *προπορεύσονται* in this sense, but in our opinion erroneously.—*Ὁ γὰρ Μωϋσῆς οὗτος*, etc.; the nominative absolute stands first, in order to place the chief object before the conscience: it is incorrect to suppose a contemptuous tone in *οὗτος*. As regards the logical connection indicated by *γὰρ*, it does not consist in this, that they could now indulge in their idolatrous worship without fear, as Moses, its uncompromising opponent, had disappeared (Meyer); the meaning rather appears to be, We know not what has become of Moses who has led us, and has hitherto gone before us at our head: now we must have in his place a divine leader, and this shall be the god which Aaron makes. That there also lay in this thought an undervaluing of Moses, a revolt from fidelity to him and his guidance, is unmistakeable.

7. *And they made a calf.*—The making of the image of a

bull (for which a word nowhere else found in Greek literature is formed, *μοσχοποιεῖν*) is here ascribed to the people as their act, whilst in the history it was Aaron only who completed the work. Nevertheless, Stephen with justice ascribes the act to the people, because Aaron acted only at their instance and according to their will; he was thus in a measure only the obedient servant to the sovereign will of the people. The image of a bull was, without doubt, a symbol borrowed from Egypt, whether Apis at Memphis in Upper Egypt, or Mnevis at Heliopolis in Lower Egypt, be regarded as the pattern: both were living bulls and were divinely adored. The ancients, as Spencer, Selden, and the moderns as Lengerke, suppose Apis; whilst Ewald advocates Mnevis. This image Stephen names *εἴδωλον*, which, strictly speaking, it was not; for, according to the intention both of the people and of Aaron (Ex. xxxii. 4), it was to be a visible image of the true and living God-Jehovah, but was not to represent a false and vain god. But because the worship of God by graven images, according to the nature of the case, passes imperceptibly and involuntarily into real idolatry of the creature, this image of Jehovah is called an idol. *Τῷ εἰδώλῳ* is also designedly added to *ἀνήγαγον θυσίαν*, for in Ex. xxxii. 6 it is simply said, "they offered burnt-offerings." Stephen wishes to show that the Israelites offered sacrifices, not properly to God, but to the idol. "They rejoiced in the work of their hands;" by which is manifestly indicated the sin against the Creator, which consists in idolatrous joy in that which they themselves had made—in the creature.

8. *But God turned and gave them up.*—Here the discourse turns to the divine punishment on their manifest disobedience and apostasy from the worship of the living God. God turned from them: *ἔστρεψε* in the middle and reflective sense, as *ἀναστρέφω* (vers. 15, 16); not in a transitive sense, *convertit animos eorum* (Heinrichs); nor adverbially as שׁוּב, *rursus tradidit* (Morus). The latter meaning would be in point of fact erroneous, because there is no trace of an earlier idolatry into which the Israelites relapsed. The former meaning would be tautological with *παρέδωκεν αὐτούς*. The word expresses the merited displeasure with which God henceforth treated the sinful people. That God *παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς λατρ.* is not simply an expression of the divine permission, as Chrysostom

and later interpreters understood it, but indicates a divine act whereby God manifests His punitive justice. That to which God gave up the Israelites was star-worship; the adoration (λατρεύειν) of the star-world, a form of idolatry native both in Egypt, and in Chaldea and Phœnicia.

9. *Have ye offered gifts and sacrifices to Me?*—In proof of the actual idolatry of the Israelites during their journey through the wilderness, Stephen appeals to Amos v. 25, a passage which he repeats at first according to the Septuagint, and then freely. The question (ver. 42) μὴ—Ἰσραήλ implies: Ye have certainly offered to Me no sacrifices these forty years in the wilderness! without doubt a rhetorical reproach which does not take into consideration the sacrifices offered to Jehovah on account of the prevailing idolatry. It is therefore unfounded to explain μοι by ἐμοὶ μόνῳ. The positive (ver. 43) is then brought forward: "Ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch:" the Greek is here verbally taken from the LXX., which has rendered מַלְכְּכֶם "your king," that is idol, by τοῦ Μολόχ, led, without doubt, by conjecture. סִכּוּת is the portable tabernacle which was carried on their journey, a counterpart of the tabernacle of the congregation. Little is known from ancient writings of the nature and meaning of Moloch: he appears to have been a star-god. With regard to Ῥεμφάν, the Septuagint, which our text follows, deviates yet more from the original: ἄστρον probably indicates the representation of a star, the image of the star-god Remphan, a name which the Septuagint places for כִּיּוּן, whilst it appears to be of Egyptian origin and to refer to Saturn. The divine threat, that the idolatrous people would be thrust out of the land and led away to a distance, is in the original, which the LXX. follows, more exactly determined by the mention of Damascus, beyond which Israel should be led away. But Stephen here, with reference to the historical fulfilment of the threat, mentions Babylon instead of the Syrian capital.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. *Moses a type of Jesus.*—This is evidently implied in the mention of the prophecy of Moses, of "a prophet like unto me." Moses, a man by whom God spake to the fathers: Jesus, by whom God has spoken in the last days. Moses, a mediator be-

tween God and the people: Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man. Moses, denied and rejected by his people, through their disobedience and refusal to submit to his guidance and command: Jesus, denied by His people, thrust out, crucified, because they would not have such a Messiah to rule over Israel. But Moses, favoured by God (mighty in word and deed), accredited by miracles, and sent as ruler and deliverer of his people: Jesus, sent and anointed by God as Redeemer, Messiah, and Saviour. Certainly the law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

2. Stephen is consistent in teaching that the revelation of God to Moses was given by the medium of an angel: thus vers. 30, 35, concerning the call of Moses at Horeb, and, ver. 38, concerning the giving of the law and the entire intercourse of Moses with God. Certainly God Himself by the angel spoke with Moses, God Himself sent Moses; and on this rested the high position and mission of the man in reference to the people. Yet because God spoke with Moses not directly, but by an angel, there results the subordinate condition of this prophet in contrast with Jesus Christ, which Stephen does not indeed expressly assert, but tacitly indicates, to the honour of the Messiah.

3. The commands communicated to Moses by God, and by him delivered to the people, are λόγια ζῶντα. That does not, as some interpreters think, import so much as ζωοποιοῦντα: for that the law as a whole, or any separate commandments of it, are able to give and to infuse life where there is none, this Stephen could certainly not maintain, in conformity with his entire faith in Jesus Christ. But he does indeed ascribe to the law itself, life, active power: to what extent, he has not unfolded, but we may easily imagine; partly inasmuch as it quickens and lays hold of the conscience with its "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not,"—it does not leave the will as it is, but either inclines it to obedience or stirs it up to opposition; and partly, inasmuch as the promises and threatenings annexed to it are fulfilled.

4. An image of God, to which whatever degree of adoration shall or may be shown, is a false god, an idol. This is so deeply founded in human nature, in the dialectics of the thing itself, that no evasion or pretence avails. There is divine wisdom in the strict and absolute prohibition in the decalogue of every image taken from created things. Jesus Christ, the Son of

God and the Son of man, is the only true image of God in whom we see the Father. In the Catholic Church a distinction is drawn in thesis between adoration (*debitum honorem et venerationem*) and worship; but in practice the one always leads to the other, at least with the people and the mass of the Church. The name of worship only is avoided, but the thing exists and is tolerated. And thus, always and involuntarily, the idolatry of the creature follows: image-worship leads to idol-worship.

5. The justice of God has shown itself in this, that God turned from the Israelites and gave them up to idolatry. Because they had in their hearts turned from Him (ἐστράφησαν), so He, on His part, justly turned away from them (ἔστρεψε). Because they against His command had made a creature-image of Himself, He gave them up to complete idolatry and to the worship of the creature. As the sin, so the reward and punishment. If thou forsake and depart from God, He will forsake and depart from thee. Thus God punished the idolatry of the heathen (Rom. i. 23–25). The impartial justice of God similarly punished the similar sin of Israel. And even so is it with the analogous apostasy within Christianity.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

But when the time of the promise drew nigh (ver. 17). What a faithful God! He does not forget His promise, but fulfils it even long after the death of the man. Mark this, thou disheartened teacher: thou mayest not see the use of thy work, and thou mayest in the mean time with Abraham fall asleep; yet God will fulfil His promise after thy death (Apost. Past.).

Who knew not Joseph (ver. 18). Nothing more quickly becomes old, than a benefit received (Starke).

That their young children should be exposed (ver. 19). The young children of the Israelites in Egypt, those little martyrs, and the children of Bethlehem murdered by Herod, belong to the same category (Besser).

When he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up (ver. 21). What God wills to live, no tyrant can destroy (Starke).—*And nourished him for her own son.* Pharaoh, who had given the cruel order for his death, must bring him up in his own court. Thus God knows how to protect His chosen, and makes their enemies their servants.

And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (ver. 22). God, to whom all the gifts and powers of nations belong, knew how to use even the knowledge of the Egyptians for the accomplishment of His work (Starke).—It is a gift of God, when He grants any one opportunity to learn the wisdom of the world. It may become useful for the service of God: only to human knowledge must be added divine grace, to bare learning, the Spirit who quickens it, and the disposition which makes it fruitful. (Moses was learned, and was mighty.) (After Apost. Past.)

It came into his heart to visit his brethren (ver. 23). He is not a true Moses, who is not moved by the affliction of the Church of God.

And smote the Egyptian (ver. 24). To be a believer and a manslayer, certainly do not harmonize together. But this deed belongs to those extraordinary and heroic actions which are not for our imitation, such as the actions of Phinehas (Num. xxv.) and Elias (1 Kings xviii.).—Moreover, this killing was not the design of Moses: he wished only to protect the oppressed: besides, it did not arise from private passion, but from love to his people.—In the counsel and plan of God, this deed was converted into an example of what He would accomplish by Moses,—the overthrow of the Egyptians, and the deliverance of Israel (After Starke and the Apost. Past.).

But they understood not (ver. 25). So, when Jesus came unto His own, His own received Him not.

Wilt thou destroy me? (ver. 28). A melancholy state of matters, when the sick man will not recognise his physician, the subject his prince, the slave his liberator, man his salvation, and will not permit himself to be helped. Thus we act toward Christ (Quesnel).

Fled and became a stranger (ver. 29). Thus the Jews, by their ingratitude, added forty years to their bondage, as even at that time God would have succoured them by Moses (Starke).—On the other hand, God used these forty years in preparing Moses for his calling. In solitude and stillness, God prepares His own. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in word and deed. He was also convinced that God would use him for the deliverance of Israel, and therefore, perhaps, thought that he was qualified enough. But no, he

must first flee out of the land, and wait forty years before he was called, although in the interval he was obliged to hear much sad intelligence. It is an evil sign when one thrusts himself into office, and cannot wait until God draws him forth (Apost. Past.).—*Waiting time in the kingdom of God, a time of secret ripening.* 1. To the adversaries for judgment. 2. To believers for surrendering themselves to the divine guidance. 3. To God's instruments for the service of their Lord.

The burning bush (ver. 30). A sign and type: 1. Of Israel, as in Egypt it resembled a degenerate and wild thorn-hedge, burning, but yet not consumed in the glow of the brick-kiln, and in the heat of trial: 2. Of the Messiah, according to His human lowliness (a thorn-bush), and divine glory (the flame in the bush), inseparable in one person (the bush not consumed): 3. Of the Christian Church, in its insignificant cross-form, constant trial, and indestructible powers of life. This bush has now burned for nearly 2000 years, and yet we have never seen its ashes.

Moses trembled (ver. 32). Not from slavish fear, but from pious humility. How good is it for a teacher, who must so often stand on holy ground, to experience such holy trembling, not only at the commencement of his ministry, but also during its continuance. Will not this filial fear and reverence for God be a barrier, by which many useless words, vain gestures, and other sinful things will be prevented, and an incentive always to speak and act as before God, in God, and from God? (Apost. Past.).

Put off thy shoes (ver. 33). An exhortation to put off earthly stains and conceited pride in the presence of the Lord. 1. For ministers in the study and in the pulpit. 2. For hearers in their church-going and at worship.

I have seen (ver. 34). The greater our need, the nearer is God. 1. He sees the sufferings of His people. 2. He hears the sighs of believers. 3. He comes down at the proper time. 4. He sends out His servants.

This Moses (ver. 35). Moses basely denied by his people, but accredited by God; so powerfully accredited by God, and yet ever again denied by his people. So blind is the world to the manifestations of the divine glory, so ungrateful for the proofs of the divine compassion, so thoughtless before the judgments of the divine holiness.

Who received the living words (ver. 38). *The law of God, a living word.* 1. It is living in itself, an efflux of the living God; and was thus for man, in a state of innocence, a law giving life, not killing and oppressing, but regulating and forming. 2. In a state of sin, it indeed at first proves itself as killing, it reveals spiritual death and threatens eternal; but even there it is not dead but living, otherwise it could not as a fire burn in the hearts of sinners, and as a sword pierce them; and also it there operates to life, awakening the conscience and pointing to Him whose word gives life. 3. Lastly, in a state of grace, it is not dead and abolished, but objectively in Christ, the Revealer and Fulfiller of the law, it has become living and embodied, and subjectively by the Holy Ghost it is employed as a motive of life, and as a power of sanctification in the heart and life of the believer.

Whom our fathers would not obey (ver. 39). This gives us a good direction for our conduct toward those who, in order to confirm themselves in their disobedience to evangelical truth, appeal to the fathers and the ancients. We must show to such how we indeed permit the ancients to remain as fathers, but how we cannot use their conduct as a rule in so far as they were disobedient to the Gospel; that rule must ever be the infallible word of God (Apost. Past.).—*And in their hearts turned back again into Egypt.* See here an image of ungrateful Christians, who thrust from them their Saviour who has delivered them from sin, and again turn in their hearts to Egypt,—to the corrupt world (Starke).—This is characteristic of the snares of the devil, that, by reminding us of the sensual pleasures which we had in the service of sin, he knows how to draw back impressed and awakened souls (Apost. Past.).

Saying unto Aaron (ver. 40). How watchful should this fall of God's servant make us! Neither spiritual gifts, nor office and dignity, can place us in security against the snares of the enemy, if we do not cleave stedfastly by faith to the Lord, and walk before His eyes. Otherwise, we are unable sufficiently to resist either smooth promises or violent threats (Apost. Past.).

But God turned and gave them up (ver. 42). The greatest punishment is when God leaves men to themselves, and gives them up to a reprobate mind, so that they fall from one sin to another (Starke).—*Have ye indeed offered sacrifices to Me?*

God does not reckon external sacrifices, but those only of the heart and spirit, Ps. li. 19; Isa. lxvi. 2 (Starke).

I will remove you beyond Babylon (ver. 43). There is always a resemblance between the guilt of sin and divine punishment. God punishes the idolatry of the Jews by an idolatrous people (Starke).—God removes the dwellings of men sometimes in wrath (ver. 43), and sometimes in mercy (ver. 4) (Starke).

On the whole section (vers. 17–43).—*Moses the deliverer of his people, and Christ the Redeemer of the world.* 1. Wherein Moses resembles Christ. (*a*) Both accredited by God; by a wonderful deliverance in infancy (Pharaoh and Herod); by their silent ripening for their great mission (Moses in Pharaoh's court and in the wilderness, Jesus in the carpenter's cottage at Nazareth and in the wilderness at Jordan); by their solemn call to office (Moses at Horeb, and Jesus at His baptism); by the rich manifestation of the Spirit and of power (Moses mighty in words and in deeds, Jesus a prophet mighty in deeds and words); by the deliverances wrought out by them; and by the judgments inflicted on an ungrateful and disobedient people. (*b*) Both denied and rejected by their nation: their divine mission misapprehended (ver. 27), their pure intention calumniated (ver. 28), the freedom offered by them despised (ver. 39), their memory blotted out among an ungrateful generation (ver. 40). 2. Wherein Christ is superior to Moses. Moses redeems from bodily, Christ from spiritual bondage; Moses redeems Israel, Christ mankind; Moses effects a temporal, Christ an eternal redemption; Moses acts as a servant, Christ as the Lord.—*The training of Moses, an example how God prepares His chosen instruments.* 1. By great dangers and mighty deliverances (ver. 21). 2. By human instruction (ver. 22) and divine illumination (ver. 30). 3. By the experience of the world (vers. 22–24) and quiet intercourse with one's own heart (ver. 29). 4. By deep humiliations (vers. 27, 28) and high proofs of favour (vers. 32–34). (Observe similar experiences in the education and life of Joseph, David, Elijah, Paul, Luther, and others.)—*God's chosen instruments.* 1. The metal from which He takes them. 2. The fire in which He forges them. 3. The tests by which He proves them. 4. The deeds which He performs with them. —*Moses a pattern of a true reformer.* There is necessary for this, 1. Profound knowledge and living experience of the heart;

2. Clear insight into the times, and a warm heart for the people; 3. Heroic courage in the face of the world, and childlike humility before God and His word.—*Moses a man of God and at the same time a true man of the people.* 1. From the people, according to flesh and blood; yet, 2. Above the people, according to spirit and character. 3. For the people, in word and in deed; yet, where the law of God is concerned, 4. Against the people and their wicked lusts.—*Moses among his people, or divine mercy and human ingratitude.* 1. Divine mercy (vers. 35–38). Human ingratitude (vers. 39–43).

Part III. of the Speech: the post-Mosaic time, comprehending the present.

Chap. vii. 44–53.

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the pattern which he had seen: 45 Which our fathers, after they had received it, also brought with Joshua into the land, when they entered on the possession of the Gentiles, whom God thrust out before the face of our fathers, until the time of David, 46 Who found favour before God, and requested that he might find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built Him an house. 48 But the Most High dwelleth not in that which is made with hands; as saith the prophet, 49 Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: what house will ye build for Me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of My rest? 50 Has not My hand made all things? 51 Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted and slain, who prophesied beforehand of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been the betrayers and murderers? 53 Who received the law as the regulations of angels, and have not kept it!

Ver. 44. Ἐν after ἦν in the textus receptus is weakly attested, and is to be considered as spurious.

Ver. 46. Τῷ Θεῷ is attested by A.C.E., versions, and fathers; whilst τῷ οἴκῳ, which Lachmann has preferred, is in B.D.H., but it does not so well suit the context.

Ver. 48. The textus receptus, after H. and several fathers, inserts after χειροποιήτοις the word ναοῖς, which is awanting in all the other principal MSS., and is evidently an addition of a transcriber. Even Bengel has recognised it as such.

Ver. 51. The plural καρδίαις, preferred by Lachmann, is indeed strongly attested by A.C.D.; whilst the singular τῇ καρδίᾳ has only E.H., but also the Oriental versions and most of the fathers, for it. The plural appears to be a correction to suit ἀπερίτμητοι and the parallel word ὠσίν; whilst the singu-

lar would hardly have been put in place of the plural, were it not originally there.

Ver. 52. Ἐγένεσθε is without doubt genuine: γεγένησθε has only some of the oldest MSS. for it.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness.—Σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου is with the Septuagint, and also here, the translation of אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד. Whether this interpretation, supported by the derivation עוּד, עֵד, is erroneous (De Wette, Meyer), is the more uncertain, as the actual import of מוֹעֵד is by no means positively clear. The balance still wavers between the interpretations, "tabernacle of the congregation" and "tabernacle of manifestation." The preceding verse (ver. 43) speaks of a σκηνή, and here again of a σκηνή; there of that of an idol, here of that of the true God. This forms the thread of connection, though not bringing prominently forward the contrast between the idolatrous worship and the worship pleasing to God. The sanctuary forms the centre of the following part of the discourse (vers. 44–50): at first, the holy tabernacle was the sanctuary in the wilderness, and afterwards in Canaan; and then, from the time of Solomon, in the temple as the holy house.

2. *As He had appointed, speaking unto Moses.*—The holiness of the tabernacle was evident from this circumstance, that God gave positive directions to Moses with respect to it, that it was to be made, and how it was to be made, namely, similar to the pattern which was shown to Moses on Mount Sinai. The holy tabernacle, with its vessels, was indeed made with hands, a human work; but on the other hand it was a sanctuary, prepared according to an express command of God, and formed according to a divine and ideal archetype. On this account Philo, in his life of Moses, expresses himself thus: Moses was instructed for the building τῶν μελλόντων ἀποτελεῖσθαι σωμάτων ἀσωμάτους ἰδέας τῇ ψυχῇ θεωρῶν, πρὸς ἃς ἔδει, καθάπερ ἀπ' ἀρχετύπου γραφῆς καὶ νοητῶν παραδειγμάτων αἰσθητὰ μιμήματα ἀποκονισθῆναι.

3. *Which our fathers, after they received it, also brought into the land.*—The holy tabernacle served not only in the wilderness; but also in Canaan it remained the sanctuary until the time of David and Solomon. Οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν, according to the context, denotes another generation of fathers, namely, the contemporaries of Joshua, who in conjunction with him entered into and pos-

sessed the land: however the words μετὰ Ἰησοῦ do not belong to οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν, as more particularly defining them, which construction would necessarily require the article, but they belong to the verb εἰσήγαγον. Διαδεξάμενοι is not = *successores*, nor does it merely stand in place of the adverb, "afterwards;" but it imports that this generation of men received the tabernacle from their fathers, and succeeded to it as a holy and valuable inheritance. The words ἐν κατασχέσει τῶν ἐθνῶν are in so far inaccurate, as, in reference to the nations, they call entering into possession, what was in point of fact a seizure of territory which had belonged to the vanquished and expelled nations. The determination of time ἕως τῶν ἡμερῶν Δαυΐδ is not, with Kuinoel and Baumgarten, to be referred to ἔξωσεν, but to εἰσήγαγον: the former has the meaning, that the work of driving out the Canaanitish nations continued until the time of David; but the expulsion of the nations was a secondary matter, the chief subject being the sanctuary and its history. Referred to εἰσήγαγον, the additional clause means that the tabernacle was brought in with Joshua into the land, and from that time until the days of David served as the exclusive sanctuary of Israel.

4. *David requested to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.* —To take ἠτήσατο merely for *desiderabat* (Kuinoel), is arbitrary, and moreover unnecessary; for although, in the history itself, a request to this effect is not demonstrable in the prayer of David presented to God, yet we find something similar in Ps. cxxxii., which, particularly its first five verses (according to the LXX., Ps. cxxxi.), undoubtedly floated before the mind of Stephen: compare ver. 5, ἕως οὗ εὕρω τόπον τῷ κυρίῳ σκήνωμα τῷ Θεῷ Ἰακώβ. Σκήνωμα, in distinction from σκηνή, is a sure and permanent dwelling-place: according to the context, is meant a dwelling-place worthy of the God of Jacob, a worthy sanctuary. This earnest request of David, which in the psalm is expressed in the form of a vow, remained unfulfilled, because God Himself refused permission to the king. Stephen does not expressly assert this, yet it is presumed as known. It is to be observed that (both in ver. 46 and in ver. 47) the thought and wish, as well as the completion of the building of the temple, appear as a human thought and act; not, as with the tabernacle, executed by God's will and command, and according to His directions.

5. *But the Most High dwelleth not.*—The connection is: although Solomon succeeded in erecting, in the place of a portable tabernacle, a fixed house, a splendid temple, as the sanctuary; yet the temple is by no means to be considered as the truly suitable and exclusive dwelling-place of God, to which He was bound by His presence and manifestation. With marked emphasis the negative *οὐκ* is placed after the particle *ἀλλά* as a protest against the superstitious delusion of the dignity of the temple. In the sentence itself, *ὁ ὕψιστος* and *χειροποίητα* form the contrast; *ὕψιστος*, corresponding to the idea *ὁ Θεὸς τῆς δόξης*, prominently displays the infinite greatness and glory of God; and *χειροποίητα*, (which the LXX. (Isa. xvi. 12) use for the tabernacle of Moab), is designedly put without *ναοῖς*, in order to place the universal notion of the work of man in contrast with the Creator Himself, and to put the delusion regarding the temple on the same footing with the superstition regarding the idols. The prophetic saying to which Stephen appeals (Isa. lxvi. 1) is taken almost verbatim from the LXX. The idea is: the whole creation, however great and wide, however deep and high, is the dwelling-place of God; therefore can no house built by men be either His exclusive or His inclusive dwelling-place. As He Himself is the Creator of all things, so He does not require human help to obtain a place of rest. With this prophetic saying, Stephen indirectly legalizes every change in the temple-service, whatever might be introduced by Jesus and the Gospel: he contradicts the delusion, as if the temple were the absolutely necessary and only proper place of divine adoration. But he does not intend, as Baur and Zeller suppose, to pronounce a condemnatory judgment on the temple and the temple-service in itself. Of this there is no trace in the words, and the entire context and plan of the discourse do not cause us to expect anything of this kind.

6. *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised.*—On a sudden, the speaker assumes a different tone. Hitherto he has sketched an historical picture, now he contemplates the present: hitherto he has treated of the earlier manifestations and leadings of God, now he points to the person of Christ: hitherto he has described the earlier generations of Israel, now his contemporaries stand before his scrutinizing glance: hitherto his tone was calm and

didactic, now he addresses his hearers directly with unrestrained and vehement indignation. If he had hitherto represented the history chiefly with the design of defending himself from the charges raised against him, and had only pointed indirectly at the faults of the present: he now proceeds to the attack, and holds up before his hearers their sins, accusing them with prophetic indignation. The transition is rapid, but, if we consider that the view of the speaker in this history of the past was always directed to the present, not without a motive: and it is not at all necessary to conceive an external occasion which moved him to this invective, as for example an interruption by the shouts of the hearers or by their threatening gestures (Kuinoel and Olshausen).—The reproach of hardened feeling and uncircumcised heart, which is so often in the Old Testament brought against the Israelites, and which so deeply mortifies their self-conceit, is here intended chiefly to denounce their deeply rooted disinclination to allow themselves to be ruled by the Spirit of God and to submit to His will. With this corresponds the positive reproach (designedly and strongly expressed by *ἀντιπίπτειν τῷ πν. τ. ἁ.*) of vehement resistance to the guidance of the Spirit of God. But the reproach is so expressed that the people of Israel are regarded collectively, as one person in all their different generations. *Ὡς οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν καὶ ὑμεῖς*, and *ὑμεῖς ἀεὶ—ἀντιπίπτετε.*

7. *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?*—A proof of the continued resistance to the Holy Ghost. The fathers have persecuted and killed the prophets, who spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God, and indeed persecuted them all without exception (*τίνα . . . οὐκ ἐδ.*). Their ancestors have persecuted and killed those men who prophesied beforehand of the coming of the Messiah,—that *ὁ δίκαιος* who is the only and perfectly Just One, and who justifies many (Isa. liii. 11). What the fathers did to the prophets, that had those now living done to Him who was promised by the prophets: "Ye are become the betrayers and murderers;"—*προδόται* by their accusations to Pilate and by delivering Him up to his power, answering to *ἐδίωξαν*; *φονεῖς* by His crucifixion, answering to *ἀπέκτειναν.*

8. *Who have received the law εἰς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων*, that is, that it should be esteemed and obeyed as the regulations of angels (*legem eo habendam loco, quo habendæ essent constitutiones*

angelorum. Bengel). Meyer's objection to this, that Israel received the law, not as the commands of angels, but as the commands of God, confounds what Stephen says with what the book of Exodus says. The explanation *legem ab angelis promulgatam* arbitrarily sets aside the import of εἰς, and exchanges it for ἐν. The concurrence of angels in the giving of the law is certainly not mentioned in the Hebrew, but yet is taught by the traditions of the Rabbins, and some faint traces of it are also to be found in the Septuagint (Deut. xxxiii. 2). The relative οἵτινες always generalizes, either by pointing from one subject to many similar ones, or by leading from definite subjects to one general idea: as in this passage, the present generation of God's people is comprehended with all earlier generations, and included under the idea of disobedience to the received law of God. The conduct of the Jews then living to Jesus and His followers flows from, and is explained by, this general character.

9. *The principal thought, object, and historical genuineness of the speech.*—The chief thought, and the relation of the speech to the accusation and to the whole historical circumstances, have been very differently understood; and Erasmus has, without doubt, expressed the thoughts of many interpreters when he says, *Multa inesse, quæ non ita multum pertinere videantur ad id, quod instituit.* On the other hand, Bengel has with justice observed: *Quamquam non ponit enuntiationes enuntiationibus adversariorum directe contradicentes, tamen ad omnia nervose respondet.* At all events, it is erroneous to place the chief point of the discourse, as Kuinoel does, in that part which was still to follow, but which, on account of the tumultuous interruption and the immediate murder of the speaker, was not delivered. In later times, Baur has represented the chief thought of the speech to consist in this: that the more illustrious the benefits of God to Israel have been from the beginning, so much the more obstinately and ungratefully have the people conducted themselves. This is noticeable, however, only from the Mosaic period downwards, whilst in the entire patriarchal period (vers. 2–16), with the single exception of ver. 9, not one word indicates a thought of this nature. Therefore Luger and Baumgarten have sought the leading thought elsewhere;—the former, in this, that the law was subordinate to the promise; the latter, in the pointing out of the gradual and successive steps in the history of the

divine revelation of the Old Covenant. Neither of these points of view, however, appears so prominently throughout as to allow us safely to assume a distinct design in either direction. On the other hand, the light of the divine δόξα (ver. 2) continually stands out beside the shadow of human unbelief and disobedience to the Spirit of God and to the men of God, which showed itself always on the part of Israel; that is to say, the unrestrained glory and absolute independence of God, in virtue of which He from the beginning manifested Himself as He will, determines and arranges the time and place, the form and order, of His manifestations, He being restricted neither to the temple as the exclusive place of His presence, nor to Canaan as the only land of His revelations. It is certainly not accidental that Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Arabian desert are named along with the promised land, as places where God spoke with the fathers, and manifested Himself by miracles. The speech of Stephen, therefore, consists chiefly in an examination, partly apologetical and partly polemical of the history of Israel, in which the past always serves as a mirror to the present, and in such a way that, first of all, the absolute authority and freedom of God to reveal Himself, and subsidiary to this, the unsusceptibility and opposition of Israel in earlier and present times, are brought prominently forward. This last thought is, at the close of ver. 51, expressed in open and emphatic reproach.

As regards the historical genuineness of the speech, it is only in the most modern times that the whole has been declared to be a free composition invented in later times (Baur, Zeller, and B. Bauer). When, however, it is asserted as a reason for this opinion, that the artificial plan betrays a premeditated composition,—this is by no means convincing. Precisely the character of the speech, in virtue of which the leading thought and actual design are so very differently understood, speaks for its genuineness. Were it made and freely composed to suit the circumstances of a later period, the references of the apology and answer to the accusations would, without doubt, have been clearer. If the impossibility of an exact tradition and preservation of the speech be maintained, it is, on the other hand, to be observed: 1. That the speech, on account of its historical contents and chronological order, would be the more easily impressed upon the memory. 2. That the martyrdom of Stephen, following immediately after-

wards, would impress the recollection of his speech strongly on Christians, and cause the repetition of it among them: indeed, would soon also make it desirable to note down this his last testimony, and would cause this to be done, just as the history of the martyrs was so carefully recorded at a later period. Whoever he may have been who first recorded the speech, need not disturb us: at all events, he was a Christian, and not an opponent; and it is not in itself improbable that individual Christians might have been present at the sitting of the Sanhedrim as spectators and listeners. The supposition that Saul, whom we may certainly suppose as present at the transaction, wrote down the speech (Baumgarten), is entirely destitute of all positive support.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. As the image of God may be converted into an idol, so also may the temple, the house of God, tend to the superstitious and idolatrous worship of men. There is in fallen man a leaning to the created, in virtue of which that which is God's creature, His image, helpful to devotion, leading and pointing to Him, is regarded and honoured more highly than it ought to be, as something existing for itself; as in itself sacred and sanctifying; as a guarantee of communion with God and of eternal life: so that the living and personal God Himself is placed in the shade, and put in the background. And as soon as it comes to this, superstition and an idolatrous disposition are present. Thus was it with the temple to which the Israelites trusted: "The temple of the Lord is here," Jer. vii. 4. So is it also with the Church, not with the mere church-building, but with the Church of Christ itself, whenever the Church is exalted, though unconsciously, above Christianity, and whenever the living Christ and living fellowship with Him become secondary considerations. Then a warning, a protest, an exhortation to duty, to worship God in spirit and in truth, to honour Him morally, to seek living fellowship with Him, is ever in place. Thus the prophets in the Old Testament testified and reproved; thus does Stephen here, in conformity with the prophetic expressions; thus the Reformation is a return to the only acceptable worship in spirit and in truth; and thus also our time requires a renewed warning against the superstitious error and the idolatry of

χειροποίητα, against the saying, "Lo here is Christ, or lo there."

2. The unity of the history of revelation is beautifully illustrated in this speech of Stephen; and indeed both as regards God and as regards man. What God formerly promised, He has now fulfilled: formerly He sent His servants, the prophets, whose chief work was nothing else than to proclaim beforehand the Messiah who was to come; and now that Just One has come who was promised. But men resist the Spirit of God and His gracious will: the fathers persecuted and slew those men of God, the prophets; their sons and descendants have betrayed and murdered the Just One. They had the law and the word of God (λόγια ζῶντα), but they did not keep it. Now grace is offered to them in Jesus; but they thrust it and the kingdom of God from them. Their fathers did not hear the law, did not obey it, did not permit it to exert its influence over them; and now their descendants deal in the same manner with grace and the Gospel.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

According to the fashion that he had seen (ver. 44). God arranges religion and His worship on earth according to the religion of heaven, of which it is only a sketch (Quesnel).

Whom God drove out before the face of our fathers (ver. 45). Where God makes His dwelling-place in the heart, there must every unclean thing first be removed, as the Canaanites before the entrance of Israel (2 Tim. ii. 21), (Starke).—Be comforted, ye messengers of evangelical truth, carry joyfully the testimony of the word of Jesus to the heathen; God will drive out the heathen nature before you, and make Christians (Starke).

David requested—but Solomon builded (vers. 46, 47). David, a type of Christ, in the state of humiliation, in which He provided the store of His merits for the building of His Church. Solomon, a type of the exalted Christ, as He constructed and finished the building of His Church, with that which He had won in bloody conflict, Eph. ii. 21 (Quesnel).—Peaceful souls only are fit to build, and to cause to be built, a temple to Christ in the heart (Starke).

Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples (ver. 48). Of

what God will build His true Church: 1. Not of gold and silver: worldly might and splendour. 2. Not of wood and stone: the Christianity of external customs, and the service of dead works. 3. Not of paper and parchment: external confessions of faith and forms of government. 4. But of living hearts, founded on Christ by faith, united to one another in love, and growing up to heavenly perfection in hope.—Idolatry not merely outside the Church, but also in the Church, and with the Church.—*How God builds His temple.* 1. In the Church. 2. In the heart. 3. In heaven (Kapff).—*How the Holy Ghost builds the temple of God.* 1. In the Church. 2. In the closet. 3. In the fellowship of believers. 4. In the completion of the kingdom of God.—*The true temple of God.* 1. The visible not to be despised (vers. 46, 47). 2. The invisible not to be forgotten (vers. 48–50).

Ye uncircumcised in heart and ears (ver. 51). Where the heart is uncircumcised, there also are the ears. When poor souls feel that the word of God has pierced their heart, then they willingly lend us their ears; but if they will not let the word come into their hearts, then they soon stop their ears, like the hearers of Stephen.

Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? The great consistency in the history of the kingdom of God. 1. On the part of God, consistent grace and truth. 2. On the part of man, consistent blindness and hardness of heart.—We often speak much about, and praise the excellence and holiness of this and that author of good rules, and yet do not act according to them (Quesnel).

Ye have received the law as the ordinances of angels, and have not kept it (ver. 53). The heathen, who receive the law of nature, are punished for their transgression of it: how much more shall they who receive the law by divine revelation, and yet tread it under foot! (Starke).

On the whole speech of Stephen.—The great men of God of sacred antiquity held up before the eyes of posterity: 1. As heralds of divine grace and truth; 2. As earnest preachers of repentance to a degenerate generation.

C.

Stephen is stoned, but dies victorious in the Name of Jesus.

Chap. vii. 54–60.

54 But when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. 57 Then they cried with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord, 58 And thrust him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 But he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, retain not this sin to them. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Ver. 56. Tischendorf, after A.B.C., prefers the reading διηνοιγμένους to the usual word ἀνεῳγμένους, attested by D.E.H. and the fathers.

Ver. 57. Κράξαντος, instead of the usual word κράξαντες, is only in a single MS., and is decidedly objectionable.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But when they heard this.*—The reproaches which the speaker had made against his hearers on account of their godless disposition, their transgressions of the law, and the crucifixion of Jesus, sensibly wounded their self-esteem and aroused their wrath, until now with difficulty suppressed. Yet what led to the outbreak was what Stephen now said.

2. *But he being full of the Holy Ghost.*—The more his hearers rose in passion, and were filled with carnal zeal, even with the spirit from the abyss, the more was the soul of the faithful witness, by the grace of God, filled with heavenly zeal, with the Holy Ghost from above. Instead of regarding the men before him, who with their increased hostility and rage might have been able to inspire him with anxious fear or carnal zeal, he lifts up his eyes and looks toward heaven with the longing gaze of faith and hope. He sees in spirit, in an ecstasy, what the bodily eye cannot see, and what no one else at that moment and in that place saw, namely, the δόξα Θεοῦ (compare ver. 2, ὁ Θεὸς τῆς δόξης), the heavenly glory, where God Himself appears, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and what he sees, he forthwith, as a bold confessor, asserts aloud.

In his words (ver. 56) there is a twofold vision of the inner sight: "the heavens opened" (where the plural is to be observed) even to the innermost sanctuary, to the highest heavens; and "the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." The name here used for Jesus, *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, is remarkable: a name which the Redeemer so often used Himself, but which never occurs in the Gospels in the mouth of another, and is never used by the Evangelists themselves, by any apostle in an epistle, or elsewhere in the Acts of the Apostles. But here Stephen calls the Messiah, Jesus, by this name, perhaps Dan. vii. 13 occurring to his mind. And certainly the use of this name in our passage is a testimony for the historical truth of the tradition which we have before us. So also it is entirely peculiar, that Stephen sees Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Both in the answer of Jesus to the high priest (Matt. xxvi. 64), and in the expressions of the apostles and evangelists (*e.g.*, Eph. i. 20, Mark xvi. 19), there is mention of the sitting of the Lord at the right hand of God: thus in this point the expression in our passage deviates from the established form, and this circumstance also speaks for the genuineness and fidelity of the narrative. But what does this standing of Jesus at the right hand of God import? Without doubt, that He has risen up and stands ready to welcome and to receive His faithful witness—*quasi obvium Stephano* (Bengel).—The very circumstance that Stephen only has this vision, no one except him,—for the narrative in ver. 55 can be understood only from the words of the ecstasy in ver. 56,—speaks for the credibility of this account. There requires neither the weakening suggestion, that Stephen would only express his strong faith in the glory of Christ and his approaching entrance into heaven (Michaelis), nor the solution that the narrator has converted into an actual ecstasy his individual view of the subject.

3. *Then they cried out.*—It was Stephen's last words, testifying to the exaltation and glory of Jesus, in virtue of the vision granted to him, which raised the rage of his hearers to the highest pitch, and led to the actual outbreak of their fury. First the hearers cried out to drown the sound of his voice, and stopped their ears in order not to hear his supposed blasphemies. Then they rushed suddenly in a mass upon him, and drew him with violence out of the city, where they stoned him. The

assembly was therefore suddenly interrupted by a tumultuous outbreak, and the apparently orderly trial was changed into a fanatical onset of the people, which ended with stoning as an act of religious popular justice. Accordingly, neither a formal sentence was passed (Ewald), nor was the sentence of the Sanhedrim submitted to the Roman procurator for his assent to its execution: in both respects the proceeding was against law and justice. But to maintain that such a tumultuous issue of a session of the Sanhedrim (which, moreover, did not begin free from passion) is inconceivable, is too rash. There is, in point of fact, no reason to reduce the historical truth of the narrative to an onset of the people, and to strike out the transactions within the Sanhedrim as unhistorical, as Baur and Zeller are inclined to do. *Ἔξω τῆς πόλεως*, according to the law, Lev. xxiv. 14, that a blasphemer should be stoned without the camp, in order not to desecrate the dwelling-place of the people by the execution. The *ἐλιθοβόλουν* of ver. 58 is anticipatory and general (not to be understood as a *conatus*), whilst afterwards the proceedings are related in detail.

4. *And the witnesses laid down their clothes.*—Those who had borne witness against Stephen were, according to law (Deut. xvii. 7), bound to cast the first stones against the criminal. In order not to be hindered with their wide and many-folded garments, they take off their clothes, and gave them in charge to the youthful Saul. Then they and the rest of the people cast stones at Stephen.

5. *Stephen cried.*—There are two sayings of the dying confessor and martyr. The one was a request for himself; the other a prayer for his enemies and murderers. The one was a prayer to Jesus, the exalted Lord, that He would take his dying spirit, and receive it to Himself in heaven: the other, which he, falling on his knees, cried out with a strong and distinct voice, was a prayer for the forgiveness of his murderers. *Μὴ στήσῃς —τὴν ἁμ. ταύτην*: literally, "Establish not this sin to them," in contradistinction from *ἀφιέναι*; or according to others, "Weigh not this sin to them," that is, requite it not according to strict justice. Both prayers are addressed to Jesus. This cannot without violence be disputed, as regards the first (since the very name of Jesus is mentioned), and is also to be assumed of the second.

6. *And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*—Luke indi-

cates the end of Stephen designedly with a word that appears the least suited to express a bloody and violent death. He intends thereby to intimate, that the end of this noble disciple was calm and placid, in virtue of the divine power overcoming even the bloody death, and of the grace of the Redeemer in receiving his spirit. For, overcome and murdered by the barbarous violence and brutal rage of enemies inflamed by hell, Stephen nevertheless, in succumbing, has conquered gloriously by his stedfast faith, his love toward his enemies, and his patience. On the other hand, the people of Israel have in this affair apparently conquered, quickly crushed and put to death the able and bold confessor of Jesus; but yet, in truth, by their enmity displayed against Stephen, by their obstinate rejection of the truth, and by the violence of their passions, they have lost in a moral and religious capacity, degraded themselves, allowed themselves to be overcome by infatuation and passion, and thus are not the conquerors, but vanquished.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The vision granted Stephen immediately before his cruel end, for the strengthening of his faith and Christian character, the view of the heavenly sanctuary opened up to him, was not an external appearance, but an internal vision. Only in virtue of the fulness of the Holy Spirit imparted to him was this glance into heaven granted. From within the Holy Spirit works outward; but He here makes the vision not simply internal, but as it were embodied and represented to the external eye, so that Stephen saw with his eyes (*ἰδού, θεωρῶ*) what his heart had before believed. This vision was a foretaste of the sight which, in a blessed eternity, comes in the place of faith.

2. *The Son of man standing at the right hand of God.*—Stephen sees Jesus, and recognises Him. Without doubt he knew Him when on earth, and loved Him as his Lord, and heard from His own mouth the name, Son of man. The exalted Redeemer ever remains truly man, the born of a woman. —There is frequent mention in Scripture, in different forms, of the exaltation of Jesus Christ. The apostles and evangelists tell us that He has sat down (Mark xvi. 19; Rev. iii. 21), or that God has placed Him at His right hand (Eph. i. 20). Jesus Himself says, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right

hand of power" (Matt. xxvi. 64). Here Stephen sees Jesus standing at the right hand of God. There is in all these places expressed, partly the most perfect personal communion with God the Father, and partly the authority of divine government; but the different forms of expression ought without doubt to cause us to guard against an exclusive adherence to one or other representation, as if it were the reality itself, and ought to remind Christians that the word in this world is only an image for faith, and not the heavenly reality for sight.

3. Exegetically, there can be no doubt that Stephen invoked Jesus Himself; that Jesus appeared to him in the ecstasy ready to receive him, and looking down upon him with love and sympathy. On this account, he invokes Him for himself and his murderers: nothing was more natural than this. And who will blame him? It is precisely because Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God in the most intimate fellowship with Him, sharing in the government of all things, that He can, and may, and should be invoked in prayers which are directed to Himself. This can be no encroachment on the divine honour of the Father; rather it redounds to the glory of the Father (Phil. ii. 10), who has exalted His Son Jesus Christ, that we should honour Him even as we honour the Father. Certainly it is otherwise if we pray to Christ only, and never invoke God the Father. But to this the New Testament gives no countenance, either by doctrine or by example. The prayers of the New Testament are throughout, as a rule, invocations to God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. The history of the martyrdom of Stephen is the only martyrdom which is related in detail in the Acts of the Apostles, and, indeed, in the New Testament. Stephen was the first martyr of the New Covenant, and a cloud of witnesses have followed him. There exists a copious history of those who have kept the faith and patience of the saints, and have sealed the Gospel with their blood. But in this there is mixed the sinful propensity to set the creature in room of the Creator, and to place in the shade Him in whom alone is salvation, and who alone possesses a perfect fulness of merit. According to the intention of the Holy Spirit, the history of Stephen directly opposes this error: first, inasmuch as it is the only full history of a martyr in the New Testament; and secondly, according to its

contents, inasmuch as Stephen is not strictly contemplated therein, but, in point of fact, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is displayed and glorified. Everything that is elevating, holy, and victorious in the life and death of Stephen, depends entirely on fellowship with the sufferings of Christ and resemblance to His death. As Jesus on the cross prayed, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," so Stephen prays, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And as the Redeemer prayed for His enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," so Stephen prays for his murderers, "Lord, retain not this sin to them." Without doubt, the crucifixion of Christ and His words occurred to the mind of the dying Stephen; yet it was Christ Himself who dwelt in him by faith, who spoke by him, and suffered with him. The image of Jesus was reflected from him; Christ is glorified in Stephen and in his martyrdom.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

They gnashed on him with their teeth (ver. 54). As a chained dog bites him who would unchain it, so the ungodly cannot endure the contact of those who would rescue them; they take it for an injury, and "will rend them" (Matt. vii. 16), (Starke).

He looked up to heaven (ver. 55). What the earth rejects, heaven receives (Starke).—God is wont to manifest peculiar favour to many dying persons, that before their departure they may be blessed with a foretaste of eternal life.—*Jesus, standing at the right hand of God.* Jesus, the exalted One, 1. Sitting at the right hand of Majesty: (*a*) as God's co-regent, (*b*) as the Judge of the world; but also, 2. Standing, (*a*) to protect His people against their enemies; (*b*) to receive them after they have fought the good fight.—The Sabbath-rest of the Redeemer, like the Sabbath-rest of the Creator, an active and living rest.—*Behold, I see the heavens opened.* The open heaven above the deathbed of believers.—*And the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.* Only in Christ, is heaven open concerning our life and death.—Christ at the right hand of God still the Son of man. Consolatory light from this truth for this and the future life.

They thrust him out of the city and stoned him (ver. 58). Blessed throw which throws us to God! When the world casts us out of its bosom, we fall into the bosom of Abraham

(Starke).—*Out of the city.* Thus had it happened with Him also whom Stephen confessed. Out of the city! is even now cried to the true witnesses of Jesus. Men cannot long confess Christ with impunity in any city; and if stones are not now rained down upon them, yet they have the filth of blasphemies thrown at them (Gossner).—*The stones which the world lifts up against the witnesses of God* are changed,—1. Into monuments of shame for the enemies of the truth; 2. Into jewels in the crowns of the glorified martyrs; 3. Into the seed of new life for the Church of Christ.

And the witnesses laid their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul (ver. 58). One witness is stoned, another is already being formed (Starke).

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (ver. 59). Lord Jesus! Precious battle-cry of the children of God, the watchword by which we discover ourselves, the trumpet-sound before which the walls of Jericho fall! What the sound of the alarm-bell is, when fire is in the city: what the signal-shot in the field is, when the enemy draws near; that is the cry, "Lord Jesus," in the Church of God. This is the cry with which sucklings are born to the Lord, and with which the aged pilgrim goes out of this world; in which all the sighings of believers are clothed, and all their longings are poured out.—The sword, the pilgrim's staff, everything, we have together in these words, Lord Jesus. —"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Into the hands of his King he commits his spirit. O eternal refuge! It is not terrible to fall into these priestly hands; on this altar, one may very well sacrifice himself. Many a one, only in the last moments of his life, becomes conscious that he has a soul which cannot go the same road with the body. Whither now with this soul? Back again into the world? But its portals are closed. Into the hands of the devil? That were dreadful. Into the hands of the Almighty? He is a consuming fire. To the Lord Jesus? He believes not on Jesus. Horrible dilemma! But Stephen is not embarrassed. He has room and space enough. He sinks on the breast of his Mediator: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! (Krummacher.)

Lord, retain not this sin to them (ver. 60). This request of Stephen in its various aspects. 1. As the request of one dying. 2. As the request of a soul which entirely forgets itself. 3. As

the request of a man who is striving after nothing but the kingdom of God (Schleiermacher).—Si Stephanus non sic orasset, ecclesia Paulum non haberet (Augustin).—Little is said of the anguish and death of Stephen, for all is temporary and light, and not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. It is only briefly said that he fell asleep. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God" (Apost. Past.). —*The best testament of a Christian.* To commend, 1. his soul to Heaven; 2. his body to the earth; 3. his friends to the divine protection; and 4. his enemies to the divine compassion (Starke).—*The end of Stephen.* 1. His last look to heaven. 2. His last testimony to the Lord. 3. His last care for his spirit. 4. His last prayer for his enemies (Florey).—*How the cross of Christ is reflected in Stephen living and dying.* 1. The shame of the cross: before the same chief council,—the like false accusations, the like unrighteous sentence, — a similar thrusting out of the city. 2. The glory of the cross: displayed in courageous defence, in patient meekness, in love blessing its enemies (Jesus' first and Stephen's last dying words), and in a blessed hope of heaven (Jesus' first and Stephen's last dying words).—*The death-chambers of Christians.* 1. The battle-fields of world-conquering faith. 2. The sanctuaries of blessing love. 3. The places of triumph of blessed hope.—*The first Gospel martyr.* 1. The matter for which he died. 2. The divine assistance which he experienced. 3. The composure with which he passed away (Krummacher).—*The power of Christ in believers.* 1. He strengthens them to boldness in confessing, the power of which their enemies cannot resist. 2. He adorns them with a purity of conduct, which the tongues of blasphemers cannot stain. 3. He fills them with a tenderness of love, which prays for their bitterest enemies. 4. He sweetens their dying with a blessed insight into His eternal glory (Leonh. and Spieg.).—We see, in the example of Stephen, how a Christian is, 1. in life, full of the activity and wisdom of faith; 2. in suffering, full of the serenity and courage of faith; and 3. in dying, full of the confidence and peace of faith (Bachmann).—*The beautiful marks with which the Lord sealed the nobleness of the soul of this His disciple.* 1. He was full of faith and power, and did miracles and signs among the people. 2. He was full of calm and heroic courage under the injuries of the world.

3. He was full of confident courage at the prospect of death. 4. His memory was blessed, and worked new life (Saul), after he had fallen asleep (Hofacker).—*Stephen* (a crown) *and his three crowns.* 1. The fair crown of grace, with which the Lord adorned him in his life and work. 2. The bloody crown of thorns, which he wore after his Saviour in suffering and death. 3. The heavenly crown of glory, which was reserved in eternity for the faithful martyr.—*The appearance of Jesus Christ, as an appearance which brings life and death.* 1. It brings life: the primitive Church, the power of wisdom and word in Stephen. 2. It brings death: bodily and spiritual death. 3. It brings life in death: blessed end of Stephen, conversion of Saul (Hofacker). —The manger the way to the cross, the cross the way to heaven. —The manger, the cross, and the crown, the three stations in the life of the disciple as of the Master.—*The victory of the dying Stephen.* 1. He triumphs over the murderous cry of a hostile world by a look of faith to heaven. 2. He overcomes the sharpness of death by a childlike surrender of his spirit into the arms of Jesus. 3. He triumphs over flesh and blood by a priestly petition for his murderers. — *The dying Stephen, an illustrious example how the children of God conquer in yielding.* 1. The yielding: of the cause and person of Stephen. 2. His victory: here and hereafter.—Here through fight and scorn, there the crown of glory: here hope and trust, there possession and sight, for the crown of glory succeeds the fight and scorn.[1] — *Why the death of Stephen is the only martyrdom recorded in the New Testament?* 1. Because in this history we find the principles of all succeeding martyrdoms. 2. In order that Christ's glory be not diminished, and that we, as the dying Stephen himself, regard above all Him who is the author and finisher of our faith.

[1] From a German hymn.

PART THIRD.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND IN ITS TRANSITION TO THE GENTILES. (CHAP. VIII.–XII.)

SECTION I.

THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM, BEGINNING WITH THE STONING OF STEPHEN, IN WHICH SAUL ACTS A CONSPICUOUS PART, OCCASIONS THE DISPERSION OF BELIEVERS OVER JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND THROUGH THIS VERY MEANS, THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THESE REGIONS, AND THE CONVERSION OF A PROSELYTE FROM A GREAT DISTANCE. (CHAP. VIII.)

A.

The Flight of the Members of the Church from Jerusalem contributes to the Propagation of the Gospel in Judea and Samaria. In particular, Philip preaches Christ to the Samaritans with success, and even Simon the Magician is baptized. The Apostles Peter and John afterwards come and bestow the Holy Ghost and unmask Simon. (CHAP. VIII. 1–25.)

I. The Persecution and Dispersion.

CHAP. VIII. 1–4.

1 But Saul had pleasure in his execution. And on that day there arose a great persecution against the Church at Jerusalem. But they were all dispersed in the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 But devout men buried Stephen, and made a great mourning for him. 3 But Saul laid waste the Church, entering into every house; and he drew forth men and women, and committed them to prison. 4 Then they who were dispersed went farther and preached the Gospel.

Ver. 1. Πάντες δὲ. The Alexandrian MS. and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read τε; whilst all the cursive MSS. and versions read δὲ, which therefore is to be preferred.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

1. *But Saul had pleasure in his execution.*—Tischendorf places this sentence at the conclusion of the seventh chapter. But it belongs rather to the beginning of this, forming the transition to the greater extension of the persecution of the Christians. Even ἦν συνευδοκῶν, instead of the simple preterite, expressing the idea of continuous duration, has its point in what follows.

2. *There arose a great persecution.*—The expression ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ is usually taken in its widest sense, "at that time" (Luther). But there is no reason to depart from the literal meaning, "on that day." On the contrary, it is beforehand psychologically credible, that directly on the stoning of Stephen an outbreak of fanaticism against the Christians in general would follow: as also Bengel remarks, from that day, *non differebant adversarii.* As the savage beast, when it has seen blood, then becomes truly bloodthirsty, so the rage of brutally excited men, especially when religious fanaticism participates in it, increases more rapidly after a successful outbreak. Days hardly passed before the general persecution commenced. It is possible, that the multitude, immediately on their return to the city, began to fall upon the Christians. This persecution was, without doubt, not entirely a measure of the theocratic court, but an act of the people, who were excited and had participated in the stoning of Stephen.

3. *They were all dispersed.*—The members of the Church fled from the capital before the persecution, in conformity with the permission and direction of the Redeemer (Matt. xx. 23). At first they betook themselves to the neighbouring districts of Judea, where they might find a refuge in other cities and villages; many of them went to a greater distance—to Samaria. It is, however, asked, Is πάντες to be here taken strictly = every one, every man? Luke himself makes an exception, πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων. The apostles, at all events, remained in Jerusalem. They regarded Jerusalem as their post, to which they were appointed by the command of the Lord, and which, without an unequivocal intimation from Him, they were not justified in forsaking. Israel and its capital, the holy city, were still esteemed by them to be the future capital of the kingdom of Christ. Thus the apostles remained in danger by reason of their faith, and the courage arising from it. But, except the apostles, did not a single Christian remain in Jerusalem? This appears doubtful in itself, and the more so if it is considered that not long afterwards (chap. ix. 26) disciples are present in Jerusalem, and not merely the apostles who are mentioned only in ver. 27 of the same chapter. Ver. 3 of our chapter is thought to make against the strict rendering of πάντες, as even after the dispersion (ver. 1) Saul was able to lay waste the Church, and to commit men and women to prison (Meyer). We would, however, lay no

stress on this; for ver. 3 does not appear to us to describe a later event, but to depict more exactly the διωγμός stated generally in ver. 1. Still, however, we are not convinced that πάντες διεσπάρησαν is to be taken in its literal and strict sense, but is rather to be understood hyperbolically; yet not that we are justified in explaining the word πάντες by *multi* (Kuinoel), or in referring it to the *doctores* (Bengel), or in referring ἐκκλησίαν exclusively to the Hellenistic portion of the Church (Baur). Also the supposition of Baumgarten (English translation, p. 177) will not stand the test,—namely, that the Church at the very time that Stephen was stoned were assembled, sympathising and praying for him, and that against this assembly the first onset of the persecution broke loose, so that it was dispersed on the spot. According to this, nothing more is indicated by πάντες διεσπάρησαν than that those disciples who were accidentally assembled were all dispersed. But, first, it were remarkable if the apostles in that case were not also dispersed, for they would surely be present in the assembly. Besides, Baumgarten must violently separate διεσπάρησαν κατὰ τὰς χώρας, which words are in the text directly connected; for he makes the dispersion of the assembly the direct, and the flight out of the city, the indirect effect of the persecution.

4. *But devout men buried Stephen.*—Δέ after συνεκόμισαν expresses a contrast between the piety of these individuals and the excited passions of the mass of the people. The ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς are without doubt, as in chap. ii. 5, Jews, but not, as Heinrichs and Da Costa think, Christians. These are in the Acts of the Apostles always differently denominated. They were Jews who paid this last tribute of respect to Stephen, and provided a solemn mourning for him; but they were εὐλαβεῖς, that is, men with whom the fear of God was of greater account than the fear of men and regard to the present disposition of the mob, and who therefore were not deterred from providing an honourable burial for a man of whose innocence and piety they were convinced, although he, as a supposed blasphemer, had died the shameful death of a criminal. Analogous to this is the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea, who had not been before that a disciple of Jesus (at least according to Luke and Mark).

5. *But Saul laid waste the Church.*—In contrast to the piety mentioned in ver. 2, and in connection with the anticipatory and

general account in ver. 1, Luke informs us of the part which Saul took in the persecution of the Christians. He laid waste the Church (ἐλυμαίνετο), that is, he damaged and destroyed its existence as a Church as much as he could; entering κατὰ οἴκους, which literally signifies "into every house," but obviously denotes, into those houses in which he expected to find Christians. If he found such, he dragged them out, doubtless with the help of the officers of the Sanhedrim, and committed them to prison. It is obvious that Saul had the hierarchy on his side, for otherwise he would not have ventured to force himself into private houses, nor would the prisons be at his command. Yet this verse supposes that much depended on the person of Saul, and that his excited fanaticism inflicted much injury on the Church. The new and revolting part of the matter was the systematic searching out of the disciples of Jesus, the arbitrary entrance into private houses, a prelude of the later Roman Inquisition.

6. *They that were dispersed went farther.*—This clause, united to διεσπάρησαν, and more fully explaining it, will import that the fugitive Christians did not remain quietly resident in any one place of refuge, but went farther from place to place. But what is most important is, that they preached the Gospel. They did not suffer themselves to be intimidated by the persecution which they suffered at Jerusalem, so as entirely to conceal their faith in Jesus: on the contrary, they stood forward, wherever they came, with the confession and the joyful message of the Saviour and redemption.—The notice here given is most intimately conjoined with chap. xi. 19, οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες—διῆλθον ἕως Φοινίκης, so that chap. viii. 5–xi. 18 appears as an episode.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. This persecution of the Christians, with its results, is a glorious proof of the government of Christ, who rules among His enemies, and remains the perpetual increaser of His kingdom. What to all human appearance was unavoidably destructive, so that the very existence of the Church of Christ was placed in jeopardy, must, on the contrary, serve to the increase and extension of the Church. The dispersed preached the Gospel. Thus by the storm, the seeds hitherto collected in one place are scattered hither and thither, and carried to a distance,

where they germinate and bear fruit. The Gospel commences its course over the earth, after it had hitherto, to all essential purposes, been confined to Jerusalem. Thus the Redeemer knows how to convert that into good which men intended for evil: that is to say, not only to hinder the contemplated wicked designs, but also by means of them to obtain an unexpected furtherance of His kingdom.

2. The dispersed were not apostles, for the apostles remained behind at Jerusalem. At the most, a few among them, such as Philip, belonged to the elected seven (chap. vi.); and even these were not directly called as authorized ministers of the word. But the great majority of the dispersed Christians held no ecclesiastical office whatever. Yet they preached wherever they came, without being called to do so by official duty and express commission; but entirely from the internal pressure of faith, which cannot but speak of that which affects the heart, from the impulse of the Spirit by whom they were anointed, and from love to the Saviour to whom they were indebted for the forgiveness of their sins and for their blessed hopes. Thus this spread of the Gospel without the holy city, this planting of the Church of Christ in the regions of Palestine, indeed, even beyond these regions, was effected not by the apostles, but chiefly by other Christians who held no office, in virtue of the universal priesthood of believers. According to human ideas of church government and office, it ought not so to have taken place. But the Lord of the Church does not so confine Himself even to the office of the apostolate established by Himself, as that everything must take place entirely through it in order to be lawful, pleasing to God, blessed, and full of promise. Christ thus shows that no man and no finite office is indispensable and absolutely necessary: only He Himself is ever and everywhere indispensable.

For Homiletical Hints, see below.

II. Philip preaches the Gospel in Samaria with success: Simon the Magician himself is baptized.

Chap. viii. 5–13.

5 Then Philip went down to a city in Samaria, and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitude gave heed with one accord to what Philip said, hearing and seeing the signs which he did. 7 For unclean spirits,

crying with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many paralytic and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. 9 But there was a man, named Simon, formerly in that city, who used sorcery and astonished the people of Samaria, giving out that he himself was some great person: 10 To whom small and great gave heed, saying, This is the power of God, which is called great. 11 But to him they had regard, because that for a long time they had been astonished with his sorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, men and women. 13 And Simon himself believed also, and was baptized, and continued with Philip, and was astonished when he saw the miracles and signs which were done.

Ver. 5. The article with *πόλιν*, which Lachmann, after A.B. and two later MSS., has received, is an addition; it is wanting in by far the most of the cursive MSS. and in Chrysostom: it was designed to denote the capital.

Ver. 7. Among uncial MSS. only H. and the cursive MSS., and some Oriental versions and fathers, have *πολλῶν*: it would never have been inserted if *πολλοί*, attested by A.B.C.E., were originally there, whilst *πολλοί* might easily be a correction to correspond to the second half of the verse. *Ἐξήρχοντο* is more strongly attested than the sing. *ἐξήρχετο*.

Ver. 10. Tischendorf, after H., some versions and fathers, omits *πάντες* before *ἀπό*, though the great majority of Codd. have it; but the different position of the word in several MSS. makes it suspected, and it might readily have been added.—*Καλουμένη* is wanting only in few MSS.: it is so well attested that all the most modern critics have received it, whilst it is awanting in the textus receptus.

Ver. 12. *Τά* before *περί*, only in G.H., is wanting in all the other uncial MSS., and therefore is omitted by Lachmann and Tischendorf. Meyer considers it indispensable, because otherwise *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* would not be connected with *περί*, which, however, proves not that it must have here the accusative with it.

Ver. 13. *Δυνάμεις καὶ σημεῖα*, without *μεγάλα* or *μεγάλας*, which is a later addition occasioned by *ἐξίστατο*, is the position preferred by Tischendorf and Meyer to the usual one, *σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις*.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

1. *But Philip went down.*—It was observed before, in a general manner, that the disciples, dispersed by the persecution, preached the Gospel abroad. A particular instance of this is now related. Philip, according to the context, driven by the storm of persecution out of Jerusalem, cannot possibly be the apostle of the same name. For, according to ver. 1, the apostles remained together in the holy city. The idea, that here perhaps a later event is related, when Philip the apostle found occasion to journey to Samaria, cannot be maintained for more than one reason. First, ver. 5 stands in such direct connection with ver. 4,

that the journey of Philip must be chronologically connected with the dispersion of believers, occasioned by the persecution. Secondly, the journey of Peter and John to Samaria, who were sent by the apostles, would be inexplicable, if Philip, one of the apostles, were there. Accordingly, Philip the apostle cannot be meant, but another of the same name, and without doubt he who (chap. vi. 5) is mentioned as the second among the elected seven. And indeed the place in the list which he occupies makes it probable, that this Philip belonged to that class, and is the same who is again mentioned as *ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς, ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῶν ἑπτά* (chap. xxi. 8). Stephen is without doubt put first in the list, because his labours and sufferings made him eminently notable and memorable: and, corresponding with this, Philip appears to be placed immediately after Stephen, because important and striking things in the history of the Church are also recorded of him. It is easy to imagine that Stephen's companions in office would especially be exposed to persecution. However, the other opinion (that it was Philip the apostle), embraced by Polycrates in the second century (Eusebius, Hist. v. 24, iii. 31), the Apostolic Constitutions in the third, and others, is supported not merely by the similarity of names, but also by the appearance, that what Philip did was essentially and exclusively an apostolic work. To this the expression *ἐκήρυσσε τὸν Χρ.* appears to give support; for this literally denotes the proclamation of a herald, and therefore at least a solemn method of preaching, resting on a peculiar commission and authority: whilst of the others, only the expression *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* is used, or *λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον*. So far certainly a different kind of evangelistic work appears to be ascribed to Philip; but yet by no means of an apostolic nature, for this is specifically denoted by *διδάσκειν, διδαχή*. *Κηρύσσειν* in our passage forms a middle step between the peculiarly apostolic *διδάσκειν* and the general Christian *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον*. This strikingly agrees with the supposition that Philip was one of the seven, who in fact occupied a middle position between the apostles and the disciples in general.

2. What city it was in Samaria in which Philip met with success, cannot be certainly determined: it was one of the numerous cities of Samaria. From the mode of expression in ver. 8, it would seem that Luke himself did not definitely know the name, and that he designedly chose an indefinite form

of expression. It is improbable that the capital itself, which was also called Samaria, and named by Herod the Great, Sebaste, is meant, because in vers. 9 and 14 *Σαμάρεια* evidently denotes the country.

3. *And the people with one accord gave heed.*—Philip preached the Messiah to them, and also performed miracles of healing, partly on many possessed, out of whom the evil spirits came with a loud cry, and partly on the lame and paralytic. And the circumstance, that the inhabitants were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of these miracles performed by Philip, induced them to give devout attention to his words. This trustful and respectful attention (*προσεῖχον*, which is not so much as *ἐπίστευον*), directed to Philip and his discourses, was one given by the multitude (*οἱ ὄχλοι*) with one accord (*ὁμοθυμαδόν*); not the concern of a few, or of a party only, but of the people. The joy which pervaded the city, and which was caused partly by the healing of many sick, and partly by the joyful message of the Saviour and redemption, was so great (*χαρὰ μεγάλη*), that all were unanimous.

4. *But there was a man named Simon.*—The logical connection is as follows: Before Philip arrived, there was a certain Simon there, who by magical arts excited universal attention and found followers. Nothing is said of the origin of this Simon: either that he was a native of this unnamed city, or that he was originally a Samaritan. So far there is nothing opposed to the supposition favoured by Neander, Gieseler, and others, and combated by Meyer on insufficient reasons, that this Simon was identical with the *Σίμων Ἰουδαῖος, Κύπριος δὲ γένος, μάγος εἶναι σκηπτόμενος* of Josephus (Ant. xx. 7, 2), whom the Roman procurator Felix, at a later period, about the year 60 after Christ, employed as a pander. The statement of Justin Martyr, that Simon was a native of Gitta in Samaria, is the less to be depended upon, as there was an interval of more than a hundred years between them, and as Justin brings forward as proofs later traditions in connection with the name of the sorcerer: the penitent request in ver. 24 alone gives no security that the man did not at a later period fall back into his deceptions. According to our passage, this Simon was at all events one of those men who, in that period of religious crisis, according to Greek and Roman testimonies, travelled about in numbers, and

who, partly as soothsayers, astrologers, and interpreters of dreams, and partly as jugglers and quacks, excited attention and received general regard. This was the case with Simon: he practised, for a long period, his magical arts, and that with so much success, that the whole population of Samaria (not merely the inhabitants of this unnamed city) were filled with wonder and astonishment, put great trust in him, and entertained an extraordinary idea of his person. He gave himself out that he was some great one (*εἶναί τινα ἑαυτὸν μέγαν*); and by this he found credit with people of all age and station, who gradually entertained the opinion that Simon himself was *ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ μεγάλη*. This doubtless imports, that they imagined they recognised in the person of Simon a kind of Theophany, and believed that the mighty power of God had appeared in him. It is here carefully to be observed, that Luke makes a distinction between the magician's own statement and the delusion of the people, who were prejudiced in his favour. The opinion deifying Simon, which seems to have fixed itself in a definite theological form, is stated only as the popular opinion of his admirers, and not as the direct statement of himself. He perhaps found it advisable, and for his interest, to make statements of himself wrapped in a certain mysterious reserve. Baur and Zeller infer, from the legends current among later writers concerning Simon the magician, that the historical existence of the Simon here mentioned is doubtful. But it is a perverse, worldly, and (closely examined) a false criticism, which adduces the later fables regarding Simon, propagated from the time of Justin Martyr, but especially by the "Clementine Homilies" and "Apostolical Constitutions," as discrediting the simple and (according to other accounts of the magicians of the times) credible narrative, and puts it in one and the same category with the legends which sprung up more than a hundred years later.

5. *But when they believed Philip.*—The belief which the Samaritans gave to the preaching of Philip, who did not bear witness of himself, as Simon did, but of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God, was so much the more valuable, as it came in the place of an already established superstition, and proved itself as willing obedience by the reception of baptism.

6. *But Simon himself believed also.*—That the magician

received the Gospel, was baptized, and continued as a scholar with Philip, was evidently the greatest proof of the superiority, indeed, of the divinity of the word of Christ. What at first psychologically worked on him were the works, that is, the miracles of healing, which Philip performed, and of which he was an eye-witness and attentive observer (*θεωρῶν*). These works astonished him, as much as his own magical arts had hitherto astonished the people: this Luke evidently indicates, when he uses the same word (*ἐξίστατο*, Med.) which he had used in a transitive (ver. 9) and intransitive form (ver. 10) in reference to Simon. Hitherto Simon had excited astonishment, and now it was his turn to fall from one astonishment into another. But from this, it by no means follows (as Grotius, and after him several moderns suppose) that the magician did not consider Jesus as the Messiah, but only as a magician and worker of wonders superior to himself.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Miracles and preaching were united in Philip as in the apostles, and as Stephen also had performed miracles. But though miracles certainly contributed to give efficacy to the word, yet the word of the Gospel was the principal thing. The miracles of healing, indeed, excited attention, turned all eyes to Philip, made souls susceptible; but conversion was the fruit of the preaching of the word; and wherever the pure and unadulterated, the free and true word of the Gospel is preached, and is attentively listened to, there also it produces fruit.

2. The joy of the converted Samaritans was as the ardent joy of the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem (chap. ii. 47). In the kingdom of God reign righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. To know oneself reconciled to God, is indeed joy. To have a Saviour, is joy. To feel united to Jesus with others who love Him, is joy. I might say that the joy and delight of the believer arise from this, that the soul has found again its home, is at home, and feels at home with its God.

3. In virtue of the power of Christ, Philip cured even the possessed. As yet of no apostle is it related what this man did, who was not vested with the apostolic office. Bengel here has this acute remark, that Luke in the Acts never uses the word *δαιμόνια*, when he speaks of the possessed, whilst in the Gospel

he employs the word oftener than the other evangelists. From this circumstance, Bengel thought himself warranted to infer, that the power of possession had become weaker since the death of Christ. We would put the less value on this circumstance, as in our passage mention is made of many who were possessed. But it is indeed remarkable, that in the Acts of the Apostles, possession does not occur among the Israelites, but only in heathen territories (chap. xix. 12, in Ephesus), or in the boundary between Judaism and heathenism, as the country of Samaria.

4. The magician Simon, in what he taught, sought only his own glory. How entirely different is it with Philip! He speaks not of himself, has nothing to do with his own person; but it is only Jesus Christ of whom he speaks, whose name he seeks to make dear and valuable to souls, whose kingdom he makes known and commends as the place of salvation. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Cor. iv. 5): this holds good of every apostle and evangelist in the Acts of the Apostles; and this is essential, and must continue so. Whenever a preacher begins to speak of himself, and to make faith in his person an article of belief, and whenever a community or church displays the same spirit, then error arises, leading to the sinful idolatry of the creature.

5. The succeeding history proves clearly that it was not right with the faith of Simon. But there is no ground for supposing that his error consisted in his considering Jesus only as a greater magician. At least, he could have found no support to this delusion in the doctrine of Philip concerning Jesus as the Messiah, and concerning His kingdom. There exists no indication that the error consisted in what the magician Simon believed; rather it appears that it was entirely the manner in which he believed that was unsound. It is very possible that he, so far as we can apply the term to that time, was orthodox; but in no wise was he a true believer. His faith was, as is the case with multitudes in Christianity, a mere belief of the understanding, a momentary conviction, but not a matter of the heart, not a *fides plena, justificans, cor purificans, salvans.* What does not penetrate into the heart and proceed from the heart is superficial, and leaves the man as he was, or at the most makes a hypocrite of him.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

But Saul had pleasure in his execution (ver. 1). Compare 1 Tim. i. 13, "I did it ignorantly and in unbelief." Thus may a man be blind with all the wisdom of reason, and an irrational persecutor with all supposed zeal for God. Not even the edifying end of Stephen had made a wholesome impression upon his embittered heart. And yet better an open enemy like Saul, than a pretended friend like Simon. Saul laid waste the Church; Simon continued with the apostles and received baptism. Saul acted uprightly even in his rage, for he knew no better; Simon had a heart full of the gall of bitterness and falsehood. Saul was converted; Simon was condemned.—*Except the apostles.* In severe persecution, neither ought every one to flee, nor ought every one to remain (Starke).—The remaining of the apostles was a proof, 1. Of their manly courage, which yields not a foot-breadth to the enemy; and, 2. Of their filial obedience to the command of Jesus, who had enjoined them first to fill Jerusalem with their doctrine, and then to go to all the world (Apost. Past.).—The apostles must remain as monuments, that the Lord Jesus be not driven from this territory. Thus, in the last days also, the two witnesses (Rev. xi. 8) will stand in the city where the Lord was crucified (Rieger).—*The solitary witnesses of God amid a perverse generation.* (Noah before the flood, Lot in Sodom, Abraham among idolaters, Moses in Egypt, Elijah among the priests of Baal, Jeremiah among the Jews, Daniel in Babylon, the apostles in Jerusalem, Paul among the Gentiles, the forerunners of the Reformation in the darkness of Popery.) 1. As majestic pillars of a ruined temple of God. 2. As warning beacons in the darkness of an evil time. 3. As strong foundation-stones for the future building of God.

Made great lamentation over him (ver. 2). Men who have deserved well of the Church and the community may be justly lamented, because, although it has happened well to them in their death, yet it has happened ill to the community (Starke).—The different thoughts of men on the death of the servants of Jesus. 1. The world rejoices that they are gone (ver. 1). 2. The devout regret and bewail them (ver. 2). The witnesses of Christ have power after death to move hearts. For every servant

called home, God has another in readiness: scarcely is Stephen away when Philip rises up (Apost. Past.).

But Saul laid waste the Church (ver. 3). Mark his growing rage. 1. He kept the clothes of the murderers of Stephen. 2. He has satisfaction in the death of this witness. 3. He persecutes the fugitives. 4. He seeks out the concealed. 5. He draws forth those sought out, and spares no sex. 6. He delivers those drawn forth to prison (Starke).—*A passion-period for the primitive Church.* 1. They are dispersed. 2. They bury their first martyr. 3. They are persecuted by Saul (Lisco).

They that were dispersed went farther, preaching the Gospel (ver. 4). *Sanguis martyrum semen christianorum* (Tertullian). —The storms of persecution are only winds which fan the fire of faith in the Church, and carry the sparks of truth to a distance. Compare Luther (Hymn of the two martyrs of Christ at Brussels): "The ashes will never cease to be, they are blown into all lands: neither brook, nor pit, nor grave prevents them; they put the enemy to shame: those whom in life he strove to silence by death, he is obliged, when they are dead, to permit to sing joyfully in every place with full voice and tongue." —How often do the ambassadors in Christ's stead remain concealed under the disguise of a persecuted fugitive! (Rieger).— Those who receive pious exiles, God commonly rewards with spiritual blessings (Quesnel).—*The wonderful ways of the Lord in the propagation of His kingdom.* 1. The martyr Stephen waters the Church with his blood. 2. The raging Saul serves, even as a persecutor, unconsciously to the extension of the kingdom of Christ. 3. The fugitive Christians are the first messengers of the Gospel to a distance.

Then Philip went down and preached (ver. 5). The true servants of Christ change their abode, but not their disposition (Ap. Past.). Faithful labourers always find work, and are everywhere at their calling, be it in Jerusalem or in Samaria (Starke).

And the multitude gave heed and saw the signs (ver. 6). Faith cometh by hearing and seeing, John i. 47–50 (Starke).— One soweth and another reapeth. Here is the harvest of the seed sown by Jesus some years before, John iv. (Starke).

Unclean spirits came out, the paralytic and lame were healed, and there was great joy (vers. 7, 8). Behold here an image of the spiritual miracles of the Gospel. 1. Impurity is ex-

pelled. 2. Weakness is strengthened. 3. Sorrow is converted into joy.—Thus it fares with sorrow in the kingdom of God. The fruit is joy. Joy at the forgiveness of sins; joy in the enjoyment of God; joy in the hope of eternal salvation.

Simon astonished the people (ver. 9). *Mundus vult decipi.*—Because people take pleasure in what is great, they are easily bewitched by whatever pretends to be so. (Compare the beast in the Apocalypse, Rev. xiii. 3, 4.) (Starke).—Simon was neither the first nor the last of the kind, whom men now-a-days call original, to whom others give heed, and after whom they talk and write. Such indeed may bring much unbelief and ungodly taste among a whole nation and generation. There will soon be no place, where there is not such an infernal barrier to the kingdom of God, to whom others look on account of his wealth, understanding, or talk, as if they were bewitched by him (Rieger).

But when they believed Philip, preaching the Gospel (ver. 12). The simplicity of the dove ever in the end prevails over the subtle charming of the serpent.—Where the truth of God is in the ascendant, there the kingdom of falsehood wanes.

But Simon himself believed also (ver. 13). To be affected by the truth, to applaud and to praise it, is not nearly all that is required, if the heart and disposition remain unchanged.

Simon the sorcerer (vers. 9–13).—*As an admonitory example of a false teacher.* 1. He gave himself out that he was some great one: false teachers do not seek the glory of God, but their own glory. 2. He bewitched the people: false teachers seek to dazzle and bewitch by popular arts, instead of enlightening and converting. 3. He believed, was baptized, and continued with Philip: thus the unbelieving often speak the language of Canaan, because they observe that it is effective; and contract a hypocritical bond of fellowship with the servants of God, in order to cover their foul stains with the cloak of pretended sanctity.—Saul (vers. 1–3), Simon (vers. 9–11, 13), and Philip (vers. 5–8, 12): the upright enemy, the false friend, and the faithful servant of the Lord, each indicated according to the disposition of his heart, his manner of acting, and his fate.—The first Christian persecution and its blessing: it is seen how Saul, Philip, and Simon, each in his own way, served for the glory of the Gospel.

III. The Apostles Peter and John come to impart the Spirit, on which occasion also the Magician Simon is unmasked.

Chap. viii. 14–25.

14 But when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John; 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. 16 For as yet He was fallen on none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 But when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, 19 Give me also this power, that on whom I lay hands he may also receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said to him, Let thy money go to destruction with thee, because thou hast thought to purchase the gift of God with money. 21 Thou has neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not upright before God. 22 Repent then of this thy wickedness, and request the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I see that thou art bitter gall, and entangled in unrighteousness. 24 But Simon answered and said, Request the Lord for me, that nothing come upon me of what ye have said. 25 But they, after they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the Gospel to many Samaritan villages.

Ver. 16. Instead of *οὔπω* in the textus receptus, *οὐδέπω* is recommended by Griesbach on the authority of the most important Codd., and is preferred by all the more modern critics.

Ver. 18. *Ἰδών* is much better attested than *θεασάμενος*, which is found only in G.H., and is evidently a correction for the sake of representation.

Ver. 21. *Ἔναντι* in A.B.D., a rare form, is incorrectly replaced in C. and some of the fathers by *ἐναντίον*, and in E.G.H. by the more usual word *ἐνώπιον*.

Ver. 22. *Κυρίου* is far better attested than *Θεοῦ*, a correction from ver. 21.

Ver. 25. *Ὑπέστρεφον—εὐηγγελίζοντο* are preferred by Lachmann and Tischendorf to the usual reading, which has both in the Aor.; *ὑπέστρεφον* has A.B.D., and *εὐηγγελίζοντο* A.B.C.D.E. for it.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But when the apostles heard that Samaria had received the word of God.*—The news which came to the apostles at Jerusalem evidently appeared surprising and important. It led to a determination of the apostolic college to send two of their number to the missionary field. Luke, with reference to the importance attributed to this event, uses the expression, "that Samaria had received the word of God." The thought is weakened if

Σαμάρεια is here to be taken only for the name of a city: it rather signifies the name of the country, and that too with the secondary idea of the religious exclusiveness of the Samaritans. By this is indicated, that the transition of the Gospel to the Samaritans, and their believing reception of it, formed an epoch, because the Samaritans—according to their origin a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles (ἀλλογενεῖς, Luke xvii. 18)—were regarded by the Jews as sectarians and heretics.

2. *They sent to them Peter and John.*—For the first time since the proposal to elect seven men, do the Twelve here act together as a corporation, and indeed as such a corporation to whom the guidance of the whole Church was committed. Likewise the circumstance is new, that the apostolic college sends two of their number, and these Peter and John, who hitherto had appeared as the most prominent. Certainly this mission was a mark and proof of great confidence. But it is also an intimation on the part of the college resolving to send, and an admission on the part of those who were sent, that no individual apostle, be he a Peter or a John, is superior, but that each member is subordinate to the apostles collectively. This contradicts the Romish idea of the primacy of the Apostle Peter, and proves that he stands on entirely the same footing with the other apostles.

3. *Who prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.*—What the apostles did for those already converted, was to intercede for the Holy Ghost, and to lay their hands on them. The effect was, that the converted Samaritans received the Holy Ghost. It seems as if the prayer took place once for all, as a passing transaction (Aor. προσηύξαντο); and the imposition of hands followed afterwards (τότε), so that the imposition of hands on each in succession required time; and accordingly also the reception of the Holy Ghost proceeded from the one to the other (Imp. ἐπετίθουν—ἐλάμβανον).

4. *But when Simon saw.*—Simon observed that by means of the imposition of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given. Without doubt, he might infer this from the utterances of the believers, taken in connection with the prayer of the apostles which he had heard. The question, whether Simon himself received the Holy Ghost, is set at rest; because, 1. in this case his conduct (ver. 18) would have been morally impossible;

and 2. he is evidently represented by *ἰδών* as a mere spectator, not as directly sharing in the imposition of hands and in the communication of the Spirit.

5. *He offered them money.*—Simon here betrays the genuine character of a magician: first by this, that he is completely egotistical, and regards the spiritual and sacred only as a means to increase his magical prestige, and to procure for himself a still higher position; and secondly by this, that he wishes to procure this power by money. By hoping to influence the apostles by bribes, he betrays himself as a man who acted upon similar motives. He views the communication of the Spirit in the light of magic; in other words, as a power which, without any moral qualifications, might be both transferred and exercised according to pleasure. The latter supposition is contained in *ᾧ ἐὰν ἐπιθῶ τὰς χεῖρας λαμβάνῃ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον.*

6. *Thy money perish with thee.*—Peter, who in ver. 14 had only acted along with John, now steps forward with word and deed, when a rapid decision and determined action are required. He not only peremptorily rejects the offered money, but in holy indignation and vehement abhorrence, consigns both the silver and the man who offered it to destruction. The reason of this moral indignation and imprecation is, that Simon thought and wished to purchase the gift of God with money: *ἐνόμισας* expresses not merely an opinion, but also a disposition and intention; the former, as an affair of the understanding, could not serve as a ground of moral judgment and retribution, unless united with and arising from a state of will and character.

7. *Thou hast no part.*—If in ver. 20 Peter had rejected the offered silver, together with the man who offered it, so now in ver. 21 he gives the most decided refusal to the request itself: as before, indignation was expressed in the above (*τὸ ἀργ. σου*, etc.), so here also in the repeated negation: neither part nor lot, that is, thou canst have no share whatever in it. *Ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ* must, according to the context, and indeed not only in conformity with the Hebrew דָּבָר, but also according to the classical use of *λόγος* = *ipsa causa*, denote, in this matter spoken about, namely, the power to impart the Spirit. The explanation which keeps to the meaning, "word" or "doctrine," and understands, either the share in the Gospel itself (Grotius, Neander),

or the inspired utterances of believers (Lange), either does not correspond with the context, or is too artificial. The reason why the apostle refuses so absolutely to Simon any share in the apostolic authority, is simply his insincerity. "Thy heart is not straight," not upright, right in the eyes of God; but a perversity of heart, an equivocation, influences thee.

8. *Be converted.*—From what goes before, Peter draws a practical conclusion (*οὖν*). Because it is thus with thee, change thy mind and leave off thy wickedness. The apostle preaches repentance to him as requisite, and recommends prayer for the forgiveness of sins, without, however, holding out to him any sure prospect of pardon; for *εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται* represents the issue, the divine forgiveness, as doubtful: "if perhaps it will be forgiven thee." *Ἐπίνοια* signifies the (practical) thought, idea, plan, *vox media.* Here also, as in the two former verses, the reason follows: *γάρ* (ver. 23), although with *οὖν* the reason had already been indicated in the preceding verse (ver. 22). Literally translated the words are: "I perceive thee as one tending to bitter gall and to a bond of iniquity—as falling therein:" by which, primarily, the moral disposition of Simon is indicated, and also, more remotely, the destructive influence to be apprehended from him on the young community. By "bitter gall" is probably meant poison, because the ancients considered the gall of the serpent as the seat of its poison: as also the German proverbial expression, "poison and gall," supposes a connection between these two things. *Σύνδεσμος ἀδικίας* occurs also in Isa. lviii. 6, but in an entirely different sense. Here the expression means that the whole person is as it were a bond, a bundle, whose separate parts are unrighteousnesses: it approximates to the meaning of the modern high German, Ausbund.

9. *Pray ye the Lord for me.*—What is to be thought of this request, and of the feeling which gave rise to it? Meyer at first inferred, from the circumstance that Luke afterwards makes no more mention of Simon, that he would in ver. 24 indicate the commencement of a real change of mind, and would leave it to the reader to imagine its progress and completion: but without reason. Without doubt, the old supposition, which among moderns Neander, Olshausen, De Wette, and Baumgarten have adopted, and Meyer himself in the last edition of his Commentary has assented to, rightly supposes that

there is here no genuine change of mind. The traditions of the fathers, that Simon again fell back into his magical practices, and that it became worse with him than before, inasmuch as he devoted his life to a systematic opposition to the apostles and the Gospel, are certainly to be entirely put out of the question. But this passage is itself sufficient. Peter had enjoined upon Simon, 1. change of mind, and 2. prayer for the forgiveness of sins. As regards the latter, he follows the admonition at the most partially, indeed, strictly taken, not at all: instead of praying for himself and imploring forgiveness, he requests the apostles to pray for him, and thus manifests a heart not truly broken, and the continuance of his superstitious notions, inasmuch as he expected miracles from the requests of others, without personal submission and prayer. As regards the other particular, a change of mind of a fundamental and sincere kind is by no means evident, when one, like Simon here, is only concerned about the consequences and punishment of sin, but not about its guilt and baseness; Simon has only sorrow on account of the evils threatened (*ὧν εἰρήκατε*), but not abhorrence at his sin. There are evidently no appearances which encourage us to conjecture an earnest repentance, change of mind, and reformation of Simon, and to celebrate his conversion as 'a great victory of the superior spiritual power of the apostles.'

10. *Returned.* — The two apostles were not satisfied with propounding the Gospel on the spot to the newly converted, more expressly and more fully than they had as yet received it (*διδάσκειν*, which in Matt. xxviii. 20 follows after *βαπτίζειν*, but likewise belongs to *μαθητεύειν*); but they devoted themselves directly to missionary work, and before their return to Jerusalem, they preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. That this work was not hastily discharged, but was carried on for a time, so that their return did not soon take place, is unmistakeably indicated on critical grounds, the Impf. being preferred to the Aor. (*ὑπέστρεφον—εὐηγγελίζοντο*).

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. *Baptism and the gift of the Spirit, missionary and apostolic work:* how is the one related to the other? The converted Samaritans had received baptism, but none of them had

as yet received the gift of the Holy Ghost (ver. 16). Are the extraordinary gifts and miraculous manifestations of the Spirit only meant by this, so that we may suppose the newly converted had already received, in and by baptism, the ordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost? Certainly not! That is an arbitrary supposition, according to which we must first put into the text the above distinction, or rather separation; whereas (vers. 15 and 17) *πνεῦμα ἅγιον* is used without any distinction. Besides, there is dogmatically no sure textual ground for the supposition that the gift of the Holy Ghost is directly and inseparably connected with baptism. Even chap. ii. 38, taken strictly, is not an argument for it; and chap. x. 44, 47, proves that God may impart the Holy Ghost even before baptism. The baptism of water, therefore, does not always convey along with it the baptism of the Spirit as depending upon it, and may indeed be separated from the latter in point of time. This is the concern of Him who lets His Spirit blow where He will (John iii. 8), and who in this respect puts the times and the seasons in His own power (Acts i. 7). We are hardly in a position to fathom the causes and reasons of the simultaneousness or consecutiveness of the baptism of the Spirit and the baptism of water, and in particular to refer this to any natural and finite instruments and persons whatever. When, for example, Neander seeks the reason why the Samaritans had not as yet received the Holy Ghost, in the condition of the newly converted, who, according to him, had at first received the preaching of Christ in a formal manner only, and did not until afterwards, when the apostles came down, become internally susceptible, he must first insert this distinction into the narrative, unless he can support it otherwise. On the other hand, it has been thought that the simplest reason of the fact is that Philip was not an apostle, whilst Peter and John were apostles: that is to say, the bestowal of the Holy Ghost is to be considered as an apostolic prerogative. Thus not only the Romish and Anglican Churches, who in conformity with this make confirmation an exclusive function of the episcopal office, but also many Protestant interpreters, have thought that the event is to be explained solely from the circumstance that the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost was reserved for the apostles as such. But this cannot be the opinion of Luke, as in the very next chapter he informs us that Ananias, a Christian

of Damascus, on the command of Christ, administered confirmation (the imposition of hands) and baptism to Saul in order to the bestowal of the Holy Ghost: but Ananias was not an apostle, not even one of the seven, as Philip. Thus then it was no barrier of office which made it impossible for Philip to be the instrument of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on those whom he baptized. Thus it is likewise erroneous to suppose, that the reason which induced the apostles to send two of their number to Samaria, was a desire to procure for the baptized the gift of the Holy Ghost (Meyer). It is not even said that the apostles in Jerusalem had heard of any want in this respect; but they hear only that Samaria had received the word of God, and forthwith they send two of their number down thither. Rather, they wished by this to acknowledge the work of evangelization begun in Samaria without their aid, to extend the hand of fellowship to the newly converted, and to assert and prove the unity of the Church of Christ, of which they were the chief office-bearers. Along with this primary object, it happened, from circumstances on the spot, that the labours of the two apostles were also directed to the improvement of the newly converted by the communication of the Holy Ghost, and to the preservation of the moral purity and integrity of the community in opposition to the equivocal designs of the magician.

2. Imposition of hands here occurs for the second time in the Acts of the Apostles; and that, on the one hand, as a sign of application to individuals, after prayer had been offered for all the baptized in general; and, on the other hand, as designed to be a sign and medium, in a symbolical act, of a real communication of the Spirit and of life. But that neither the apostles only were authorized to lay on hands, nor that this was the exclusive and indispensable, and as it were legal vehicle of the communication of the Spirit, is undoubtedly certain: the former from chap. ix. 17, the latter from chap. x. 44.

3. The conduct of Simon, in whom the old man again appears, has been, from of old, taken as a type of a species of conduct which is called after him—Simony. The man wished to procure a spiritual power with money: therefore the Church names the crime, when worldly means and profits are given or offered, taken or demanded, for spiritual things (as ecclesiastical

preferments, consecrations, etc.), *crimen simoniæ*, and the person who commits it, *simoniacus;* and this with good reason. It is a testimony for the purity and energy of Christian feeling in the apostles, produced by the Holy Ghost, that Peter sees so clearly through the hypocrite, and, filled with abhorrence and godly zeal, unhesitatingly pronounces on the spot the imprecation, and rejects and repels the criminal. The moral sentence of Peter (ver. 20) unfolds two faults which lay at the bottom of this attempt: 1. a wish to procure from man what God only can give (*τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ Θεοῦ*); 2. a wish to procure, and even to purchase with money, what is entirely the free gift of God's grace (*τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ Θεοῦ—διὰ χρημάτων κτᾶσθαι*). The latter is what constitutes simony. Had the apostles been willing to grant the request of Simon (which they could not), they would have transgressed the express command of the Lord: "Freely ye have received, freely give," Matt. x. 8.

4. But Simon is not only a type of all simony in the Church, but also a type of all heretics. It is well known that from the second century this magician was regarded as the founder of an heretical school, indeed as *magister et progenitor omnium hæreticorum* (Irenæus), and that to him personally a gnostical-heretical system has been attributed. That tradition has played an important part here, is undeniable. Yet it were shortsighted were we to deny the deep truth which lies at the bottom of this notion. The error of Simon, in its essence, is a mixture of heathenism with Christianity, thinking to acquire as a magical art the power to impart the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands, and hoping to use it for his own ambitious and covetous purposes. Accordingly, he attempted to blend his heathen magic with Christianity, at first, for practical purposes. But already some undefined and dim idea of the matter lay at the bottom of this plan; and also a formal theory must develop itself out of the intended practice, a theory whose nature was also a blending of heathen superstition with Christian faith. The practical must justify itself in a theory or system both to itself and to the world. Thus, then, it is not to be mistaken that there is in the disposition of Simon the germ of the gnostical, and, generally, of the heretical, tendency of mind. And as the Acts of the Apostles represents typically the experiences and phenomena of the Church of Christ, in all centuries, in their grounds

and germs, so there is here represented to us in Simon, who became a Christian, but inwardly remained the old man, and endeavoured to unite Christianity with his heathen Goëtenism, a type of all those unsound thoughts, forms, and parties within Christianity which attempt to unite what is foreign with the Gospel, and to preserve heathenism under a Christian dress; and also the sentence which is passed upon them.

5. Peter here used the power of the keys. He has not, indeed, expressly pronounced an anathema on Simon Magus: he has not, it is true, excommunicated him from the table of the Lord and from the Church of Christ; but he has imprecated destruction (*ἀπώλεια*) on his person; and this includes at least temporary excommunication from the communion of the Church and the sacrament. The apostle encounters the man with full authority, although he does not express himself in the form of a definite sentence as judge, but rather in the form of an imprecation. The motive of this *ὅτι τὴν δωρεὰν*, etc., makes it sufficiently evident that the imprecation did not arise from irritated personal feeling, or from carnal zeal and heat of passion, but from pure and upright zeal for the glory of God and His cause. The exhortation to repentance and change of mind in ver. 22, where the apostle points out, to the erring soul, penitent supplication to the Redeemer as the way of forgiveness, beautifully shows that the zeal was not that fanatical zeal in which there was no concern for the sinner and his salvation.

6. The moral character of Christianity shines forth gloriously in the apostolic declaration, which is delivered in a purely categorical form. Peter, in the plainest terms, deprives Simon of all and every hope of a possible attainment of the gift, that is, of partaking of the Holy Ghost; and that because his heart was not upright. Whilst in all magic the moral disposition of the agent and the recipient is completely set aside, and purity of heart and sincerity of disposition are of no importance whatever; in the kingdom of God, the susceptibility for grace, and for all the gifts of grace, is conditioned by moral preparedness, and especially by uprightness and sincerity of disposition.

7. Peter makes the attainment of forgiveness doubtful to Simon, yet not in itself, but because the sincerity of his repentance and conversion was doubtful. Only the great danger of the sad spiritual condition in which Simon was, prevents the

apostle promising him absolute forgiveness. It is dangerous, and contrary to Scripture, to make the forgiveness of sins uncertain to souls, doctrinally to represent it as something of which the soul can never be assured in an undoubted manner, as the Romish Church does. But, on the other hand, it is unscriptural and dangerous to souls, to sever in any way forgiveness from moral susceptibility and preparedness. And such moral susceptibility was not present with Simon, as ver. 24 proves, even after the stirring appeal to his conscience.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

When the apostles at Jerusalem heard (ver. 14). Persecution cannot hinder the zeal and care of true shepherds for the good of the Church. In a newly-formed community, care must be taken that its members are strengthened in the faith. Among the servants of God there must be no envy: one ought not to grudge another his blessing (Starke).—The chiefest of the apostles, Peter and John, assist in a brotherly spirit the less distinguished Philip (Apost. Past.).—The storm of persecution has driven a seed from the stock, and it finds a good soil. The Gospel, which is to be preached to all nations, steps out of the temple of the people of the covenant into the porch, to the nation who, occupying a middle position between Jews and Gentiles, knew and partly kept the law of Israel and the promise (Leonh. and Spieg.).—As the Lord Jesus sent His disciples two and two before Him, so, in true imitation of Him, has the sacred college of the apostles deputed from among them the two disciples who, by the providence of God, were so closely and intimately united together in the ways of the Lord. In beautiful and lovely harmony shall the testimony of the truth proceed from the mouth of these two witnesses, and mutually shall they support and encourage each other (The same).—*The first church visitation.* The occasion: (*a*) There is Christian life to be fostered (ver. 14); (*b*) there is a want in the Church to be supplied (ver. 16). 2. The visitors: (*a*) Peter—apostolic earnestness and zeal; (*b*) John—evangelical tenderness and mildness. 3. The high functions: (*a*) Humble prayer in the name of the Church (ver. 15); and (*b*) sacerdotal imposition of hands in the name of God (ver. 17). 4. The effects: (*a*) The strengthening of the Church (ver. 17); (*b*) its sifting (ver. 18).

When they were come down, they prayed for them (ver. 15). The work of the minister is not only preaching, but also prayer. God leaves not the prayer of His servants for the salvation of souls unheard.

For as yet He was fallen on none of them; only they were baptized (ver. 16). The baptism of the Spirit must follow the baptism of water; otherwise there is no complete baptism, and no true Christian. With what art thou baptized?

They laid their hands on them (ver. 17). This imposition of hands, joined with prayer, is the holy pattern of our ecclesiastical confirmation, which ought to be neither more nor less than the ratification and sealing of the Spirit who was received in baptism (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The sacred rite of confirmation.* 1. According to its origin: it is true, no sacramental institution of the Lord, but a time-honoured ordinance of the Church. 2. According to its import: it is true, no substitute for baptism or repetition of it, but a ratification of baptismal confession and baptismal grace. 3. According to its effect: it is true, no infallible communication of the Holy Ghost, as was the case with the imposition of the hands of the apostles on the Samaritans, but an incalculable spiritual blessing for susceptible hearts.

Simon offered them money, saying, Give me this power also (vers. 18, 19). To traffic with church matters and spiritual gifts as buyers and sellers, is the sin of Simon, or simony. Observe therein the following points: 1. Simony proceeds from a covetous and ambitious heart. As Simon was for so long a time held in estimation and had bewitched the people, but was now by the apostolic powers displaced from his false importance and gain: so he fell upon the wretched resolve to procure by money new honour and gain. Thus have all, who by impure means attempt to force themselves into the ministry, no other designs than to serve the idols of honour, sensuality, or mammon. On this account the Church has with justice, from of old, considered Simon as the father of heresies and the type of sectarianism; for the secret main-spring of almost all founders of sects is spiritual love of power, which, united with immoderate arrogance, by its insolent audacity and hypocritical appearance, bewitches the people cleaving to externals. 2. The sin of Simon further supposes a heart full of bitter gall, and a bundle of manifold unrighteousness. His heart was full of gall, that is, of bitter envy toward the

apostles, and the preference given to their divine preaching above his magical arts. A bundle of unrighteousness was in his heart. He had, it is true, become a Christian, but he would in his Christianity be no follower of the cross, but a proud doer of miracles: consequently, a carnal disposition. He attached himself, according to appearance, to the apostles, but in heart he was offended at them: consequently, hypocrisy. He thought to bewitch these servants of Jesus with his money, even as he had already formerly bewitched the people with his arts, and as he himself was bewitched with the idols of honour and mammon: consequently, unrighteousness toward the apostles, and a low estimation of their office and persons. Envy and jealousy, an earthly disposition and a low estimation of the ministry and its office-bearers, mark even still the followers of Simon. 3. Simon desired not *χάριν* but *ἐξουσίαν*, power to do this or that. He did not wish to save souls by the preaching of the Gospel, but only to acquire for himself a name by deeds of supernatural power. In this are all like him who desire the office and have not the grace: who in the solicitation of offices have in view, not the service of the Lord nor the salvation of souls, but their own dignity, rank, and power. Yea also, those belong thereto who concern themselves chiefly about the possession of the gifts for the office, and dispense with the qualification of holiness. They concern themselves about a specious learning, and captivating talents of address; but they are not solicitous that their understanding be enlightened, their heart changed, and their mind given to the Lord. "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke x. 20). 4. Simon offered the apostles money. Many a person does not exactly offer actual money for his ministerial office, but he employs other goods and treasures in order to obtain it in an underhand way for himself. How often is the office converted into a marriage portion! How often must this or that patron be gained over by crooked ways, before the fold be opened up! 5. Simon, along with his wicked designs, retained a slavish fear of divine punishment. He fears the damnation which the apostle threatened; but nevertheless he will not be converted, but wishes in a slavish manner to remain exempt from punishment. He has no freedom to pray himself, but he says in slavish fear to the apostles: Pray ye for me. Thus is it even now with mini-

sters who are immersed in the sin of simony. They are always slaves, filled with slavish fear. They carry about with them an evil conscience, and can have no true freedom in their ministry. They cannot rightly rely on God and act in the name of Jesus.—All ministers have to try themselves by this example whether they have received their offices *pro jure et titulo*, and if their conscience accuses them, to adopt the course which the apostle points out to Simon (ver. 22). This text remains to *canditatis ministerii* a lasting warning, that they never betake themselves to crooked paths.

Thy money perish with thee (ver. 20). This says Peter, poor in wealth, who had said to the lame man, Silver and gold have I none. He says it in holy abhorrence of the greed and hypocrisy which had so basely betrayed themselves, and in remembrance of the exhortation of the Lord, "Freely ye have received, freely give." The successors of Peter have never thought, spoken, and acted thus.—With no people must we deal more sharply than with such hypocrites, who will, under a fair covering, creep into the vineyard of Christ to the damage of souls (Apost. Past.).—Whoever will be zealous after the manner of the apostles, must have somewhat of their spirit.—To condemn is one thing, and to show to a person his damnable position is another (Starke).

Thou hast neither part nor lot (ver. 21). Whoever seeks and finds his part and lot in the things of this world, has neither part nor lot in spiritual and eternal blessings (Starke).—*Thy heart is not upright before God.* When we upbraid souls with their actual transgressions, we must ever refer them to the heart. It is not enough to deal with externals: it is more productive of good to go back to the fountain from which the evil deeds proceed. We ought therefore always, in the pulpit and in the care of souls, to unite zeal against special sins with the unveiling of the whole unconverted condition of the heart from which these sins proceed. But especially we must deal thus with hypocrites (Apost. Past.).

Be converted (ver. 22). When ministers are zealous, they must have as their single aim the salvation of those against whom they are zealous, and thus also point them to the way, that is, repentance, 2 Cor. xii. 19 (Starke).—An apostle of that Lord who came not to destroy men's souls, but to save them, has not only in his hand the thunderbolt of the law, but also the

palm of peace of the Gospel, which to all penitent sinners offers forgiveness (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*And pray the Lord.* It is good to direct souls to personal prayer to God: a counsel for all kinds of sinners, and the only means by which one convinced of his misery can be helped.—*If perhaps it may be forgiven thee.* Peter does not make the forgiveness of sins doubtful to Simon, but only represents to him the great danger of his condition, and the necessity of earnest repentance. An evangelical teacher must guard against want of seriousness as well as against weak faith and unbelief: he must not make souls unnecessarily anxious, but also he must not make them carelessly secure (Apost. Past.).

Thou art bitter gall (ver. 23). As nothing is more contrary to the taste than gall, so nothing is more opposed to God than falsehood and deceit (Starke).—The bitter gall of the heart must be dispelled by bitter repentance, thus one bitterness by another, before the sweetness of the Gospel can be tasted (Starke).

Pray ye the Lord for me, that none of these things come upon me (ver. 24). Observe the marks of false and defective repentance. 1. "Pray ye for me:" he is only converted before and to men, whom he places between himself and God, instead of being converted before and to God. 2. "That none of these things come upon me:" he seeks only to be delivered from punishment by exemption, instead of being desirous to be delivered from sin by purity and forgiveness.—Thus Simon went step by step into perdition, from which there is no deliverance, yet so that at every step grace stood by him, chiding, warning, and alluring him. Thus the last end of this man was worse than the beginning. He had received grace; but instead of husbanding it, he wished to pervert it to carnal purposes. He saw the mighty acts of God; but instead of their calling him to humility, he only by them stimulated his pride. He requested indeed a great gift, but only by it to destroy souls. He heard indeed the call to repentance; but to him it was not a call of life, but only an exhortation to escape temporal punishment (Rudelbach). —Our text teaches two lessons for all times, and especially for our days, when there is everywhere increased inquiry after the word of God, but when also people are too ready to make a display of their Christianity, and too often make a trade of godliness. 1. In order to receive the blessing of the Gospel, sincerity above all things is required. Without uprightness of heart, even that

which brings salvation becomes our condemnation, whereof Simon is an admonitory example. 2. In order to preserve the blessing of the Gospel inviolate, and to maintain inviolate the vindication of Christianity before the world, an incorruptible love of the truth, and a zeal for right and duty which at no price suffers itself to be driven from its place, are required: this the apostles teach us by their conduct toward Simon (J. A. Wolf). —*Simon a son of perdition.* 1. He feigns a faith, of which his heart knows nothing. 2. He regards the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as a means of base gain. 3. He is not moved to true repentance by the threatening of divine punishment (Leonh. and Spieg.).— *The upright Simon Peter and the impure Simon Magus.* 1. Simon Peter, the upright: (*a*) As a zealous servant of his Lord, whom he serves everywhere with joy, in Samaria as in Jerusalem; (*b*) as an earnest admonisher of sins, which he reproves with holy zeal; (*c*) as a faithful guide to the way of salvation by repentance and prayer, which he knew from his own experience. 2. Simon Magus, the impure: (*a*) In the lying nature of his heathen magic; (*b*) in the hypocrisy of his deceitful Christianity; (*c*) in the defective nature of his superficial repentance.—*The precious gift of the Holy Ghost.* 1. It perfects what the word and sacrament began. 2. It can be fraudulently obtained by no art and purchased by no money. 3. It is a free gift of God's grace, reserved for the penitent and the believing.—*The Holy Ghost, a gift of God's grace.* 1. Freely bestowed upon upright souls (the Samaritans). 2. Purchased at no price for impure hearts (Simon).

But they returned and preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans (ver. 25). The true torches of God, kindled at the fire of divine love, give light and warmth in all places.— Thus by the way, on our journeys, the fear of God should be our guide, and the love of our neighbour our companion.—It is a criminal pride when a man will gladly be a minister in renowned cities, but not in despised villages. Yet the apostles themselves here became village preachers (Starke).—It is indeed somewhat mortifying to a servant of Christ, if he experiences not the expected joy in a soul that has fallen short in its conversion. But be not discouraged. What succeeds not with one will perhaps succeed with ten. If a Simon turns back, the Lord raises up a chamberlain from Ethiopia (Apost. Past.).—*Wherein the living*

power of the Church of Christ manifests itself. 1. It continually extends its boundaries with the hatred of the world. 2. It fosters the growth of believers by the communication of the gifts of the Spirit. 3. It purifies itself by severe judgment on hypocrites and false teachers (Leonh. and Spieg.).

B.

Philip becomes the instrument of the Conversion of a Proselyte from a distance, an Officer of Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians.

Chap. viii. 26–40.

26 But an angel of the Lord spake to Philip, and said: Arise, and go toward the south, to the way which goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert. 27 And he arose and went. And, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch, and distinguished officer of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasures, who had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot, and reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 Then Philip ran thither, and heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 But he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The contents of the scripture which he read were these: "He is led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb dumb before its shearers, so He opens not His mouth. 33 In His humiliation, His judgment was cancelled: but His generation, who will describe it? for His life is taken away from the earth." 34 Then the chamberlain answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 But Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached to him the Gospel of Jesus. 36 But as they journeyed on the way, they came to water: then the chamberlain says, Behold, there is water! what hinders me to be baptized? 37, 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went both down into the water, both Philip and the chamberlain, and he baptized him. 39 But when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the chamberlain saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Asdod; and he journeyed on, and preached the Gospel in all the cities until he came to Cæsarea.

Ver. 27. Lachmann omits ὅς before ἐληλύθει on the authority of a few MSS.; but it is in most MSS. and versions, and was probably omitted in others, because it was supposed that ἰδοὺ ἀνήρ, etc., was directly connected with the verb ἐληλύθει.

Ver. 38. Ver. 37 in the textus receptus: Εἶπε δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος· εἰ πιστεύεις ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, ἔξεστιν. Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ εἶπε· πιστεύω τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι

τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. This sentence is found in one uncial MS. E., about twenty cursive MSS., some versions, and in the fathers from Irenæus, but with great variations. On the other hand, the Codd. A.B.C.G.H., the Sinaitic MS., more than sixty cursive MSS., versions, and some fathers omit it entirely. It is without doubt spurious, though an old addition, which was to fill up an apparent gap, and to insert the awanting consent of Philip and the test of the eunuch's faith. Lachmann, Tischendorf, and others properly omit the verse.

Ver. 39. After πνεῦμα, the Alexandrian MS. (by the original hand, as Tischendorf attests) has the emendation made after the writing of the original words, πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν εὐνοῦχον· ἄγγελος δὲ κυρίου. Seven cursive MSS., two versions, and Jerome have received this sentence, but it is without doubt spurious. The Sinaitic Codex wants it.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.

1. *But an angel of the Lord.*—The command was given to Philip in Samaria. Zeller indeed has maintained that Philip must have returned to Jerusalem before the apostles, and could only have received the command there; and for this the circumstance can be appealed to, that the way to which Philip should betake himself was indicated, as that which led from Jerusalem to Gaza. But the district to which Philip was to journey lay out of Samaria, at all events toward the south, and therefore nothing follows from the above indication. But especially ver. 25 speaks against the above supposition; according to which, it is evident that only the two apostles returned to Jerusalem, but not Philip, whom therefore we must suppose as meanwhile remaining in Samaria. As regards the mode of the angelic appearance, rationalistic interpreters, as Eckermann and others, have assumed that the angel appeared to Philip in a dream, for which ἀνάστηθι is appealed to. But this by itself (there being no other trace which points to the season of the night or a state of sleep) as little suggests here the notion of sleep as it does in chap. v. 17. It is rather only an evident exhortation to action.

2. *Go to the south, to the way to Gaza.*—Philip receives the command to journey to the south, that is, southward from Samaria, or generally to the southern region of the country. He was not thus obliged to journey by Jerusalem, but, on the contrary, might take a shorter way. The road to which he was to betake himself is more precisely indicated as that from Jerusalem to Gaza, and as ἔρημος. Gaza was one of the five chief cities of the Philistines, at the southern boundary of Canaan, situated about an hour's journey from the Mediterranean. It had often

been destroyed in the wars, and restored; and yet again, in the year 65 after Christ, in the procuratorship of Cestius Florus, it was converted into ruins by the rebellious Jews, but was afterwards rebuilt. Many interpreters refer the clause *αὕτη ἐστὶν ἔρημος* to the city Gaza, in the sense that the city was destroyed and uninhabited, or that it was unfortified. The latter meaning is philologically inadmissible, and the former is improbable, as this notice could only apply to a short period, and is completely unsuitable to the context, where the city Gaza itself is of no importance whatever, and only a certain road to it was to be described. The clause then refers to *ὁδός*, and characterizes a certain road to Gaza. This was the more necessary, as there were several roads from Jerusalem to Gaza (Robinson's Palestine). The most frequented, but the longest, is at present by Ramleh: this proceeds from Jerusalem at first north-west. Two other roads go in a more direct line: one down the Wady es Surar by Bethshemesh, and the other by the Wady Musurr to Beit Jibrin or Eleutheropolis, and thence to Gaza through a more southern tract. This last road now actually passes through a desert, that is, through a tract of country destitute of villages, and inhabited only by nomadic Arabs. That this district was also at that time destitute of permanent habitations, is not improbable; at least, in the time of Nehemiah neither cities nor villages are mentioned in the plain between Gaza and the mountains. Thus, then, the way which Philip should take in order to meet the man whom, according to the divine counsel, he was to convert, is exactly described by this addition, which, we think, belongs to the words of the angel, and is not to be ascribed to St Luke as an observation of his own.

3. *And he arose and went.*—Philip followed immediately the intimation given, set out, and encountered on the road indicated to him the unnamed and yet now well-known man of high rank from a distance. The name Indich, which tradition has assigned to him, is fabulous. The narrative following is a wonderfully charming idyl from the missionary history of the apostolic Church, distinguished as much by the simplicity and distinctness of its form, as by the historical importance of its contents.

4. *And, behold, a man of Ethiopia.*—*Ἰδού*, in a lively manner, pictures the scene to us: how Philip sees the stranger approaching in his chariot, who, without doubt, came behind and over-

took the foot-traveller. The man was by origin and nation an Ethiopian, that is, from the high land to the south of Egypt, and now comprehending Nubia, Cordofan, and Abyssinia, whose religious and commercial capital was the island of Meröe. We must suppose him, according to the colour of his skin, to have been a negro. Olshausen's assertion, that he was a Jew born in Ethiopia, is too weakly founded on the fact that he read the prophet Isaiah, especially as the circumstance must first be supposed, that he had the Hebrew original before him. According to his station and rank, he was a man of high position and great influence in his own country (δυνάστης); for he was chief treasurer of his queen, Candace, which in these centuries, according to Greek and Roman authorities (*e.g.*, Pliny, Hist. Nat. vi. 35), was the regular title of the queens of Ethiopia (Meröe). Luke calls this rich lord also εὐνοῦχος, which literally signifies a eunuch. But as people of this sort in Oriental courts were employed for all sorts of service about the court, so the name was often given to court officials who were not eunuchs. Hence many interpreters from the 16th century have taken the word in the sense of a court official, without reference to sexual mutilation; with which supposition concurs the fact, that this man, if not a Jew by birth (Olshausen), yet was formally received as a proselyte into the Jewish commonwealth, whilst, according to Deut. xxiii. 2, no eunuch was to be admitted into the congregation of the Lord. But that he was a "proselyte of righteousness," is itself a doubtful supposition; and as he was in the service of a queen, the opinion is the more probable that he actually was a eunuch. But he is chiefly remarkable for this, that he had come to Jerusalem to worship. This supposes that in his African home he had learned to know the God of Israel as the true God, and the worship of Jehovah as the true religion: he had now made a pilgrimage in order to sacrifice and to worship God in the holy city and in the temple of Jerusalem. There is sufficient reason to regard him as a proselyte in the wider sense (a proselyte of the gate), but not sufficient to consider him as a proselyte in the narrow and strict sense. The ancient view, which Eusebius shares (Church History ii. 1), is best founded, that he was a Gentile who had only joined himself to the Old Covenant in the free form of conviction and attachment. Sitting in his chariot, he was en-

gaged in reading the prophet Isaiah, and that probably from a copy of the Greek translation. This translation had spread from Alexandria over Egypt, and might well have penetrated beyond the limits of that country; whilst the highest and most educated classes, both in Egypt and in the neighbouring countries, were certainly acquainted with the Greek language. The pilgrimage was to the stranger no *opus operatum*, but an affair of the heart; and on his way back his soul remains in the sanctuary, and is absorbed in the word of God, namely, in the prophecies of Isaiah.

5. *But the Spirit said to Philip.*—The internal voice which incited and directed him to draw near the traveller, and not to keep at a distance from the chariot (*κολλήθητι*), was a command of the Spirit dwelling within him. Philip hastened, running quickly (*προσδραμών*) to the chariot, and, as the man evidently read aloud to himself (*ἀναγινώσκειν* signifies, in its original acceptation, to read to), heard him reading the prophet Isaiah; and, following the impulse of the Spirit, he immediately addressed him a question, expressed in an ingenious play of the words, *ἆράγε γινώσκεις ἃ ἀναγινώσκεις;* a form of question also, which, as it made a negative answer to be expected, supposes that this was not the case. The distinguished pilgrim replies, with respectful candour and modesty, that he could not understand the prophet, except some one would guide him. And as he derived confidence from the question, that the questioner has both the correct knowledge and the inclination to serve as a guide, he requests him to come and sit with him, which Philip immediately does.

6. *The contents of the scripture.*—Both now sit together, and the chariot is converted into a mission station, the journey into a Bible lesson. The African shows to Philip, on his request, the section which he was then reading, or he reads it aloud to him, in order to ask a question about the meaning and reference of the words. *Γραφή*, from the context, must here denote a definite passage of Scripture, whilst *περιοχή*, without doubt, refers to the contents of the section. The particular passage is Isa. liii. 7, 8; and the words of the LXX. (which here varies considerably from the Hebrew) are so accurately given, that only *αὐτοῦ* after *ταπεινώσει*, and *δέ* before *γενεάν*, are new. The sense of the Alexandrian version (Isa. liii. 8) without doubt is: "In His humiliation by His enemies, the judgment pronounced

upon Him was cancelled by God; but His generation -His contemporaries and their wickedness—no one can express, for they have taken away His life." *Ἀποκριθεὶς—τῷ Φιλίππῳ* supposes that Philip questioned the traveller on what he had now read, and he answered, referring to the passage, and inquiring about its meaning. And indeed his question, pointing as it does to the main point of the interpretation, proves him to have been a thoughtful reader.

7. *But Philip opened his mouth.*—By these words the answer of Philip receives solemnity and importance, and is also introduced as a detailed discourse. Luke indicates by *ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς ταύτης*, that the explanation of the prophetical words in question formed only the introduction, only a part of the answer, and that Philip soon passed over to the Gospel of Christ as the chief matter of conversation; and would thus communicate to the chamberlain shortly the principal facts and truths concerning Christ, and especially would unfold to him the way of salvation by repentance and baptism to Christ.

8. *Behold, there is water.*—Robinson observes, "When we were at Tell el-Hasy, and saw the water standing along the bottom of the adjacent wady, we could not but remark the coincidence of several circumstances with the account of the eunuch's baptism. This water is on the most direct route from Beit Jibrin to Gaza, on the most southern road from Jerusalem, and in the midst of the country now desert, that is, without villages or fixed habitations. The thought struck us, that this might not improbably be the place of water described. There is at present no similar water on this road; and various circumstances—the way to Gaza, the chariot, and the subsequent finding of Philip at Azotus—all go to show that the transaction took place in or near the plain." It is perhaps rash in Robinson to think that he has found the precise spot, whilst in eighteen centuries many changes may have taken place in the form of the soil.—The joy of a traveller in the desert, when, parched with thirst, he at length sees an oasis with a spring of living water, cannot be greater than was the joy of this pious chamberlain, when he saw the water wherein he might be baptized. Quickly won by the brief and excellent instructions, eager to become a partaker of the proffered salvation, he offers himself for baptism. And Philip, notwithstanding that the matter had so un-

commonly quickly developed itself, hesitates not to fulfil his wish. At the command of the chamberlain, the chariot was stopped, and he and Philip descended. The name of the latter is placed first, as he was the baptizer, and in so far the superior: and Philip administered to him baptism in the water by the way. Of the retinue of the chamberlain, who in ἐκέλευσε and by his being able to read during his journey are supposed, nothing is said.

9. *When they were come up.*—Philip vanished on the spot, so that the chamberlain saw him no more. Philip removed to Asdod, first reappeared there (εὑρέθη εἰς Ἄζωτον). Asdod, lying north-west of Gaza, distant from it, according to Diodorus Siculus, 270 stadia, was also one of the five cities of the Philistines. The miraculously sudden and invisible (both to the eunuch and to others, εὑρέθη εἰς *A.*) removal of Philip was effected by the Spirit of God, who by supernatural power caught and carried him away, as He formerly did to Elias. But the chamberlain proceeded on his journey, rejoicing. His proceeding on his journey is (by γάρ) placed in logical connection with the removal of Philip: it is a circumstance confirming this statement that he lost sight of Philip, for otherwise he would not have proceeded on his journey, but would have followed Philip. The rejoicing of the man depended not only on the salvation of which he was made a partaker, but also on the sudden removal of the evangelist. *Hoc ipso discessu confirmata est eunuchi fides* (Bengel). He now felt as if an angel from heaven had been sent to be a companion in his journey and had again vanished.

10. *He journeyed on, preaching the Gospel.*—From Asdod it is evident that the journey of Philip proceeded in an entirely natural manner. He journeyed from city to city, perhaps visiting Jabne, Ekron, Joppa, etc., until at length he stopped at Cæsarea on the Mediterranean, where we find him resident (chap. xxi. 8). Wherever he came he preached the Gospel. No wonder then that, along with the designation ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῶν ἑπτά, he should receive the formal title ὁ εὐαγγελιστής (chap. xxi. 8).

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. It was not the angel of the Lord, as Luther translates it, but an angel of the Lord, by whom the Lord commanded Philip to make this journey. Not a mere concatenation of circumstances as that which brought him to Samaria, not a mere sub-

jective impulse, but an express command of God, brought by one of His heavenly messengers, led Philip from Samaria to the south. It concerned the conversion and baptism of a stranger, who indeed internally was not far from the kingdom of God, but externally so much the further removed from the citizenship of the people of God: a Gentile by birth, a resident in the heathen country of Ethiopia, placed in the court of a heathen queen, and a eunuch. Precisely under these circumstances, it required a direct and miraculous command of God in order to effect the result, that such a Gentile should be incorporated into the Church of Christ by the Gospel and baptism.

2. The angel shows to Philip the aim of his journey only geographically and topographically, but without saying a word of what he was to do there, or whom he was to meet. That was an exercise of faith. So also the missionary as well as the ordinary ministerial office, which preaches reconciliation, is eminently a work of faith and an obedience in hope.

3. The word of God was the occupation of this pilgrim, returning home in his chariot. That occupation is even more precious and noble than his pilgrimage in itself. He had made the journey in order to see with his eyes the sanctuary of Jehovah, to gaze upon the holy city, and the temple, and the beautiful worship of the Lord. But now he searches into the word of God, in order to look with the eyes of the spirit into the sanctuary of God. And the word is a true sanctuary. Even when the correct, full, and entire meaning of it is still awanting, although it is only still an enigma (*αἴνιγμα*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12), and proposes a thousand enigmas, yet the loving and careful perusal of it is a blessed exercise which leads to further light.

4. Prophecy and fulfilment. The servant of God, who patiently suffering and gloriously justified, as Isaiah describes Him, is contemplated by this pious pilgrim. But who He is, is still dark to him. Is the prophet himself meant, or some other man? This he would know, and for this he wishes instruction, and seeks a guide. That guide comes to him sent of God, and declares the fulfilment of the promise. And only the fulfilment brings the true light, in which the promise can be comprehended. God's revelations are one, and give mutual light to each other: yet so that, *vetus testamentum in novo patet.* The prophet testifies of Jesus Christ, and only in Christ is his testimony

clear. "The servant of Jehovah" in Isaiah, in its widest meaning, is the people of Israel; in its more restricted meaning, the ideal Israel, in other words, the servants of God taken collectively, the true Israel, including the prophets; in its highest meaning, the personal Messiah. (See Oehler, Messiah in Herzog's Theological Encyclopædia, Delitzsch in Drechsler's Commentary on Isaiah.) But even this last meaning, as the servant of Jehovah appears in the Redeemer Himself, can, after all, be exclusively understood only in the fulfilment, in the historical person of Jesus Christ as *παῖς Θεοῦ*. The *sufficientia scripturæ*, according to the testimony of the New Testament, can only be maintained of the Holy Scriptures collectively, that is, the Old and New Testaments taken together; whilst the Old Testament, taken alone and by itself, explained and understood from itself, is not sufficient for salvation. The Ethiopian eunuch was thirsting after the truth, seeking it as honestly as any one can do, but he does not understand the prophecy, because he has no guide. But as soon as Philip showed him the way to Jesus, and brought him by the word and sacrament into fellowship with the Redeemer Himself, he needs no more a guide. Christ Himself is now to him the way, the truth, and the life, and the Spirit will guide him into all truth (*ὁδηγήσει*, John xvi. 13). That the chamberlain feels the want of a man who may serve as a guide, by no means proves, in the sense of the Romish Church, that the Bible without tradition and the guidance of the Church is insufficient to discover the way of truth and salvation: otherwise Philip would not have been caught away from this catechumen. But after baptism he is forthwith left alone, and must do without further guidance and tradition. Notwithstanding he does not feel his want, for he goes on his way rejoicing. He has found the Saviour, and with Him light for the Scriptures.

5. An angel of God had brought the command to Philip to journey to the south, to the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza. When he was there, and saw the traveller in his chariot, it was the Holy Ghost who ordered him to draw near. After the work of conversion and the baptism of the stranger were completed, the Spirit of God caught away Philip, so that the eunuch saw him no more. Thus the beginning, middle, and end of the event, are the command, indication, and work of God. But that in the history which appears natural is not less wonderful.

That Philip meets with this stranger from a distance, the evangelist from Israel with the Gentile, the guide with the inquirer and susceptible—in short, that precisely these two persons, between whom there existed a kind of pre-established harmony, are brought together,—this is a dispensation of God, under all circumstances, not less astonishing and wonderful than when God sends His angel, or removes quickly the evangelist without his concurrence. The rapid progress, by means of which seed-time and harvest follow in the soul of the Ethiopian, is even as miraculous as the invisible removal of Philip.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

And an angel of the Lord (ver. 26). If by the envy of Satan an offence has occurred in the Church of God, so the Lord does not delay to refresh His sorrowing believers by peculiar proofs of His power and favour (Leonh. and Spieg.).—Not without God does the Gospel make progress in the world, and not without God is even one soul gained.—If the law was given by the ministry of angels, wherefore should they not also be serviceable in the spread of the Gospel, into whose mysteries they desire to look? (Starke).—How precious is the conversion of a single soul in the sight of the Lord! In order to bring the chamberlain to the faith, he sends an angel to Philip, and sends Philip from populous Samaria to the desert way leading to Gaza (Apost. Past.).—*To the way which is desert.* Sin is the real waster of lands; but when the Gospel comes, then the wilderness and the desert rejoice (Starke).

And he arose and went (ver. 27). A teacher of the Gospel must go in the obedience of faith, although the call leads him into the wilderness.—*And, behold, a man of Ethiopia.* Now is fulfilled the prophecy: "Ethiopia shall stretch out its hands unto God."

Who had come to Jerusalem to worship, and was returning (vers. 27, 28). Not in the temple of Jerusalem, but on the desert way to Gaza, was he to find the pearl of great price. Thus formerly the wise men from the East had to journey on from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to find the new-born Jesus.—*Sitting in his chariot, and reading the prophet Isaiah.* The perusal of the Holy Scriptures is especially to be recommended when we come from the house of God, as the chamberlain here

from the temple, in order to preserve the good impressions which we bring from it (Quesnel).—*The word of God, the best reading on a journey:* not only on the desert way from Jerusalem to Gaza, but on the way through time to eternity. 1. We forget thereby the hardships of the way. 2. We look not aside to forbidden paths. 3. We make thereby blessed travelling acquaintances. 4. We go forward on the right path to the blessed goal. —*He had worshipped, and now read the prophet.* He indeed stood still in the twilight of pious anticipation, in his pilgrimage to the temple, and in his reading on his return; but yet he was on the right way. No man arrives suddenly at the top: by mounting, and not by flying, do we reach the uppermost steps of the ladder. Therefore let us ascend as with two feet, namely, by meditation and prayer. For meditation teaches us what is wanting, and prayer obtains so much from God, that nothing more is wanting. Meditation shows us the right way, and prayer leads us along it (St Bernard).—In the chamberlain, the blessing of faithfulness in little things is seen. That he applies his small knowledge of the God of Israel so well, first in order to take a distant journey for devotion, and secondly, to occupy his time in his journey so faithfully in reading the prophet, was an actual proof that something of the truth was in him, and must lead to complete salvation and the whole truth (Rieger).

Then Philip ran thither, and heard, and said (ver. 30). The conduct of Philip toward the chamberlain, is an excellent example how a teacher should deal with the awakened. Mark on this point the precious counsel of Spener: "A teacher ought not for ever to vex himself with dead and hardened sinners: he ought rather to attend to those in whose hearts God Himself has made, by grace, a blessed preparation for conversion." He ought to take them into his close treatment, and endeavour to fan the spark fallen into their hearts. Just as physicians, after all, can be nothing more than *ministri naturæ*, so ministers are *ministri gratiæ*. When children come to the birth, then help is necessary. That so many souls perish in these circumstances, is really a fault of the teachers, and of their inattention or unskilfulness (Apost. Past.).—Philip does not wait until he is spoken to: without compliments or excuses, with bold courage and pious forwardness, he penetrates into the spiritual condition of the man, whom God had led into his way.—Awakened souls are shy and

timid, and it is difficult for them to apply to a teacher, because in general they are afraid of him. Therefore we must go to them, and pray God for wisdom to find the right entrance into their hearts (Apost. Past.).—*And heard him read the prophet Isaiah.* If a teacher, on his visit, finds people occupied with the word of God, he must not long waste time with digressions about the weather and the state of their health, but take the word of God for his text and introduction, as it lies open.—*Understandest thou what thou readest?* A weighty question for us. 1. It supposes that we read the Bible. Is this supposition correct, or does this half-heathen put us to shame? 2. It discloses to us our natural blindness. Is our Bible reading not often an unintelligent reading, our Bible a book not understood? 3. It excites us to seek the true interpreter and guide: He it is who spoke by Philip, the Spirit of the Lord, who always lives and operates in the Church.—Three questions to the conscience in reference to the word of God. 1. Readest thou what thou hast? 2. Understandest thou what thou readest? 3. Obeyest thou what thou understandest?

But he said, How can I, except some one should guide me? (ver. 31). A diligent teacher and a people eager for learning soon understand each other (Starke).—The Holy Scriptures in the hand, and the ministerial office at the side; so wilt thou not miss the right way.—This passage of Isaiah, although he did not unstand it, had captivated his heart. It was his companion in solitude, both at home and abroad (Besser).—The Holy Scripture rejoices and captivates its readers, although they understand only a little. Spices give forth their odour through their coverings (Bengel).—The Holy Scriptures point thee to the Church, and the Church points thee to the Holy Scriptures (Rudelbach).

And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him (ver. 31). From the guest in the chariot, he becomes the guide: from the traveller kindly invited in, he becomes the director to the true fatherland.

The contents of the scripture were these: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter (vers. 32, 33). It was the finger of God which pointed to this passage; for the sum of all Christian truth is Christ, the humbled and exalted (Phil. ii. 5–9). In this is contained an admonition for all teachers to lead souls as the chief matter to the knowledge of Christ, the Crucified and the

Risen One. This, as a rule, is much more effective than moral preaching. The missionaries in Greenland who, with discourses on the living God and His holy commandments, preached for a whole year to deaf ears, struck home when they attempted it with the second article of the Creed, and commenced with the evangelical message, "Behold the Lamb of God, that beareth the sins of the world!"

I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? (ver. 34). Humbly to acknowledge our ignorance in divine things, is better than proudly to conceal it. To inquire after the mysteries of Scripture, is wiser than to mock at them.—"I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this?" the great inquiry which leads from the Old Testament to the New.

And preached unto him the Gospel of Jesus (ver. 35). The knowledge of the Saviour comprises the entire knowledge of salvation (1 Cor. ii. 2), (Quesnel).

See, there is water! (ver. 36). Everything must take place which was necessary for the grounding and perfecting of this soul in the faith. True teachers ought in faith and simplicity to proceed in the ways pointed out by God: place, time, and nature must be rendered serviceable in the work for the kingdom of God (Apost. Past.).—*See, here is water!* The joyful cry of a soul thirsting after grace, in its journey through this wilderness-world. 1. When it looks back with gratitude to the water of holy baptism. 2. When it believingly repairs to the fountain of the divine word. 3. When in hope it looks forward to the waters of eternal life.—*What doth hinder me to be baptized?* The word and sacrament are two means of grace which mutually complete each other, of which the one must not be overvalued above the other, or despised in comparison with the other. When the sacrament is despised, the body of the Church falls to pieces: when the word is set aside, its spirit dies.

Believest thou with all thine heart? (ver. 37 in the *textus receptus*). The example of the hypocritical Simon perhaps made Philip more careful to insist on belief with an entire heart. But as he saw that true faith, although not perfectly developed, yet was present in its germ and essence, he did not refuse the sacrament. An admonition for the ministry in the admission to the comforts of the word and to the sacraments, on the one hand not to act loosely and inconsiderately, and on the other hand

not to keep back souls too long, and by overstrained legal demands to dispirit and frighten them.—Confession of faith belongs to baptism according to ancient usage.—"From the circumstance that the chamberlain is not admitted to baptism until he has made confession of his faith, the general rule is made evident, that those who stand without ought not to be received into the Church until they have testified their faith. But many fanatics on this pretext falsely impugn the baptism of infants. Wherefore must faith precede baptism in the chamberlain? Because Christ with this sign marks those alone who are of the household of the Church, so must those necessarily become members of the Church who are baptized. But as it is certain that those who are grown up are incorporated by faith, so I say that the children of believers are likewise born the children of the Church, and are accounted members of Christ from the womb, for God adopts us with the promise that He is also the Father of our seed. Although, then, faith is requisite in those who are grown up, yet this in no wise refers to children who are in entirely different circumstances" (Calvin). —"How can water effect so great a thing? Water certainly does it not, but the word of God, which is with and in the water, and faith, which believingly relies on that word of God" (Luther).—Both are found here at the water. The word of God in Philip's mouth, and faith in the chamberlain's heart (Leonh. and Spieg.).—Distinguish between faith before baptism and faith after baptism. Faith before baptism speaks thus: I believe that I am a sinner, and that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Saviour of sinners; therefore I will be baptized in His name, in order that I may receive the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. From those who are grown up, who wish to be baptized, the Church requires that they speak thus orally, because they can speak, after they have heard the word of God. Infants, who cannot speak, have yet a language comprehensible to God. Their dumb misery cries to the Saviour, who for infants also has shed His blood, and promises to them the kingdom of heaven; wherefore the Church does not refuse baptism to them. Do we ever refuse meat and drink to children and sick persons who cannot work, because he who will not work shall not eat? Faith after baptism speaks thus: I believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is my Saviour, who has re-

deemed me, a lost sinner, from death and the devil, and has saved me by the forgiveness of sins. This faith made the baptized chamberlain joyful (Besser).

And he baptized him (ver. 38). The first-fruits of the race of Ham, that since the days of the flood lived under the curse, has now received the gracious flood of holy baptism (Leonh. and Spieg.).

The Spirit caught away Philip (ver. 39). When God's instruments have performed that for which the Lord sent them, they may be immediately removed, either to another field of earthly activity, or from the militant to the triumphant Church. —Would that we might be able to return to our Lord and say: "Lord, it is done as Thou hast commanded!" (Apost. Past.).—*And the chamberlain saw him no more.* Philip had converted the chamberlain not to himself, but to Jesus. A soul which by faith has found Jesus may henceforth be deprived of its guide (Apost. Past.).—*For he went on his way rejoicing.* When we have found the Lord, we can go on our ways rejoicing to our eternal home.—The effect of faith is, that it makes the heart joyful, daring, cheerful toward God and all creatures, so that it cares for no trouble (Luther).

But Philip was found at Asdod, and journeying farther, he preached the Gospel (ver. 40). He is not satisfied with this precious booty. He thought not, Now thou hast done thy part and mayest rest (Apost. Past.).—The travels of believers are ever useful: they take no step without spreading the savour of the Gospel of Christ (Starke).—Before the Gospel of Christ, the partition-walls of nations, the bulwarks of national hatred, gradually fall. Philip has won souls in Samaria, and now he preaches Christ in Philistia.

The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, an example of the way in which the Gospel was propagated during the first ages of Christianity. 1. The divine order which we perceive therein. God guides the publication of the Gospel, in such a manner and to such a place where the greatest good can be effected, and the most fruit produced in the shortest space of time. And let every one, who according to this divine order appears as one favoured, be earnestly intent on economizing this heavenly gift of grace, which is entrusted to him not for his own sake, but for the sake of the spread of the Gospel. 2. The human manner

of acting in this history. From Philip we learn to follow the drawing of the Spirit whenever we perceive it; but when it is not perceived, to remain in the common paths of ordinary calling; and further, without anxious thoughts about a mere letter-faith, to come to the assistance of the desire of salvation,—the pleasure in the word of God,—where it shows itself in a soul, and to trust that the Lord will complete the work begun by the power of His word and by the blessing of Christian ordinances (Schleiermacher). — *The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch.* 1. Occasioned by God's providence. 2. Effected by the preaching of the Gospel. 3. Sealed by baptism (Lisco).—*The blessed pilgrimage.* 1. The departure from the world. 2. The inquiry after the Lord. 3. The heavenly friend. 4. The homeward journey with him (Lisco). — *The first-fruits of the Gentiles.* 1. How the Lord moves his heart to inquire after salvation. 2. How He directs Philip to the eunuch as his teacher and guide. 3. How the eunuch receives the sacrament of baptism (Langbein).—*The history of the conversion of the Ethiopian chamberlain, an earnest of the fulfilment of greater promises.* 1. Of the two promises which the Father made to the Son: "I have made Thee to be a light of the Gentiles," Isa. xlix. 6. "I will give Him a great multitude for a spoil," Isa. liii. 12. 2. Of the two promises which are made to all: "Before they call, I will answer them," Isa. lxv. 24. "Whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," Joel iii. 5 (Langbein).—*The divine guidance of souls to life.* 1. God awakens in them a deep longing after peace. 2. He kindles within them pleasure and love to His word. 3. He reveals to their faith, the understanding of His way of salvation. 4. He seals them by the power of the sacraments with the comfort of His grace (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*How all things co-operate to promote the salvation of a soul desiring to be saved.* 1. God: by His angel and His Spirit. 2. Man: Philip, by his meeting and discourse. 3. The Scripture: the prophecy of Isaiah. 4. Nature: the water by the way.—*Four noble guides to the way of salvation.* 1. The voice in one's heart, which longs after God. 2. The intimation of Scripture, which points to Christ. 3. The guidance of the ministry, which explains both the presentiments of the heart and the counsels of Scripture. 4. The efficacy of the sacrament, which seals to us the divine grace, and nourishes and

strengthens within us the divine life.—*How the Ethiopian treasurer found the true treasure.* 1. The place where he found it: a solitary road through a waste. 2. The chest wherein it was hid: the Scripture with its dark sayings and seals. 3. The key which he obtained, by the sermon eagerly received. 4. The jewel which sparkled to him: Christ, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. 5. The right of possession which was acknowledged to him by holy baptism. 6. The blessed treasure which he carried home with a rejoicing heart. —*Philip on the way to Gaza, a type of a true minister of God's word.* 1. The pious obedience with which he follows the impulse of the Spirit. 2. The apostolic courage with which he lays hold on a soul strange to him. 3. The evangelical wisdom with which he fans the spark of faith into a flame. 4. The priestly unction with which he seals, at the proper moment, the saved soul to the Lord. 5. The Christian humility with which, after the work of salvation is completed, he steps behind the Lord.—*Philip and the chamberlain, a blessed travelling acquaintance.* 1. They meet unexpectedly, but God had for a long time prepared this meeting, by the pilgrimage of the chamberlain and by what preceded it in the leadings of his life, as well as by the missionary journey of Philip from his flight from Jerusalem to his recall from Samaria. 2. They meet as strangers—strangers in station, nation, and religion, but they soon find themselves together as brethren in the Lord. 3. They are again speedily separated: each goes on the way of his calling, but they remain blessedly united in Christ, for time and eternity. (Application to our friendships, acquaintances.) —To the pious pilgrim, the wilderness is converted into the garden of the Lord. 1. God's word is his manna, so that he does not hunger. 2. God's children are his guides, so that he does not go astray. 3. God's grace is his rivulet, so that he is thereby strengthened. 4. God's heaven is his Canaan, to which he journeys.

SECTION II.

CONVERSION OF SAUL: HIS ACTIVITY, AND THE EVENTS WHICH BEFELL HIM IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS. (CHAP. IX. 1–30.)

A.

Persecuting zeal against the Christians drives Saul to Damascus.

CHAP. IX. 1, 2.

1 But Saul, still breathing out threatening and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any walking in this way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But Saul.*—The narrative following is inserted in the history by the connecting particles δέ and ἔτι. By δέ the hostile and destructive activity of Saul is placed in contrast to the work of Philip edifying and extending the Church, of which the history treated immediately before. By ἔτι the activity of Saul, as here described, is united with his earlier activity (chap. viii. 3), as a continuation of the persecution of the Christians commenced by him at the death of Stephen. And indeed it appears as if the interval between the commencement and this unbroken continuation of the hostility of Saul is not to be conceived as short. It is not without design that Luke has placed the two narratives in chap. viii. 5–40 between chap. vii. 58 (taken along with chap. viii. 1–3) and chap. ix. 1. Thus, then, this narrative does not stand apart and disconnected. It also evidently represents the disposition and feeling of Saul not simply as continuing the same, but as increasing with time. The expression ἐμπνέων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου indicates this, which represents threatening and murder as if they were his native air in which he breathed. The hostile disposition of Saul against the Christians is thus characterized as risen to a fanatical height, delighting in murder and dangerous to life, which in chap. viii. 3 does not yet appear to have been the case. It is entirely in accordance with human nature, that a passion, by long duration and gratification, in-

creases in violence and fury, and as it were identifies itself with the character,—becomes as it were the element of a man's life: particularly is this the case with fanaticism. The heightened degree of fanaticism in Saul displays itself by the measures which he now contemplates.

2. *He desired of him letters.*—Hitherto Saul was satisfied with persecuting the Christians in Jerusalem. Now his zeal impels him to persecute the disciples of Jesus without the city, even beyond the boundaries of the country: it takes him to Damascus. This old capital of Syria, about thirty geographical miles north-east of Jerusalem, celebrated far and wide for its trade, commerce, and religion, as well as for its paradisaical situation, was, since the time of Pompey, B.C. 64, under the Roman rule, and belonged to the province of Syria. It numbered among its inhabitants, since the times of the Seleucidæ, many Jews (Josephus, Bell. Jud. i. 2, 25, ii. 20, 2), which strikingly corresponds with our passage, according to which there was more than one synagogue at Damascus (*τὰς συναγωγάς*). It appears that it was also certainly known at Jerusalem that Christians—that is, converted Jews (Saul thinks on them entirely in connection with the synagogues)—resided at Damascus. The form of the expression *ἐάν τινας εὕρῃ* evidently indicates the certainty of the expectation to find such there. They are called *τινες τῆς ὁδοῦ ὄντες*, people treading that way, belonging to that way: *ὁδός* by itself does not indicate, as is wrongly inferred from chap. xix. 9, 23, xxii. 4, a sect, but a certain mode of life and conduct. In its definite application here, it signifies the definite direction of life by faith in Jesus, as the Messiah. Luke has not informed us how the Gospel came to Damascus. The supposition is the most probable, that individual Christians from Jerusalem, dispersed by the persecution, had come to this large city. If some travelled as far as Cyprus and Antioch, individuals may have reached Damascus, which lay nearer, even earlier. Moreover, it is very conceivable that these may have spread the Gospel on the spot, and have converted other Israelites in the city. Saul had Damascus in view, because perhaps he heard of the great number of Christians who resided there, or because he himself had connections there. In order to attain his object, namely, to arrest the disciples of Jesus found there, and to lead them bound from Damascus to Jerusalem, where they should be tried,

he requested writings from the high priest, as recommendatory letters or warrants (the plural ἐπιστολάς corresponds with the plural συναγωγάς, according to which it appears as if he had requested a separate letter of authority for each synagogue). It is uncertain who was the high priest at that time, as the year of the conversion of the apostle is not determined. If the conversion of Saul took place as early as the year 36 (Hug, Olshausen, Meyer 35), then Caiaphas was still in office, who was deposed by Vitellius in the year 36. Jonathan, the son of Ananus, succeeded him, and he was succeeded in the year 37 by his brother Theophilus (Joseph. Ant. xviii. 4). It was probably the latter who was in office. It is not expressly said, but is evidently implied, that the high priest actually gave the desired letters: he could have had subjectively no reason to refuse the means to this zealot for ancient Judaism. The foreign Jews freely recognised the authority of the high priest at Jerusalem, and relatively that of the Sanhedrim, of which he was the president, as the highest legal court in religious matters. And as regards the civil authority, it must be assumed, according to practice, that it would throw no obstacle in the way of a measure which was represented as purely a religious concern of the Jews.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

Christ rules in the midst of His enemies. This is the truth which is represented to us by the fact, that Saul is permitted with hellish enmity and blood-thirstiness so long to vex, disperse, and lay waste the Church. That he attacked the Redeemer Himself with insults and blasphemies, Luke does not relate, but he himself at a later period acknowledges, 1 Tim. i. 13. Here he appears only as a persecutor of His disciples and of His Church. But the more carnal zeal, heat of passion, and devilish blood-thirstiness are mingled with ignorant zeal toward God, so much the more critical is the state of his soul. The higher fanaticism rises, so much the more powerful becomes the flesh, and the man is converted by blind rage into a blood-thirsty, ravenous, and savage beast. So far the Lord allows Saul to proceed, in order to snatch him out of the burning and to convert him. Long-suffering waits to the uttermost, but grace lets not the sinner from its sight, even in his maddest

career. Saul is an illustrious example of the love of God in Christ, seeking and saving the most desperate sinners.

For Homiletical Hints, see below.

B.

The exalted Lord appears to Saul, not far from Damascus.

Chap. ix. 3–9.

3 But it came to pass on the journey, that he came near Damascus; and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? 5 But he said, Who art Thou, Lord? But He, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 6 But arise, and go into the city, and there it will be told thee what thou shalt do. 7 But the men, who journeyed with him, stood speechless, hearing indeed the voice, but seeing no one. 8 But Saul arose from the earth: but when he opened his eyes, he saw nothing; but they led him by the hand, and thus brought him to Damascus. 9 And he was there three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Ver. 3. The Codd. A.B.C.G., subordinate MSS., and many versions have ἐκ, which therefore is properly preferred by Lachmann and Tischendorf to ἀπό, supported only by E.H. and some cursive MSS.

Ver. 5. Ὁ δὲ κύριος εἶπεν, in the textus receptus, has only G.H., some cursive MSS., and the Syriac for it; in E. εἶπεν is awanting, and in other MSS. κύριος. A.B.C. and others have only ὁ δέ, which is undoubtedly genuine, and was unnecessarily completed by κύρ. εἶπεν.—It is remarkable that the gloss after διώκεις, which Erasmus and the Elzevir have received—σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν. Τρέμων τε καὶ θαμβῶν εἶπε· Κύριε, τί με θέλεις ποιῆσαι; Καὶ ὁ κύριος πρὸς αὐτόν—is found in no MS., and is awanting in the Sinaitic Codex: E. only has σκληρόν—λακτίζειν, but not the rest. On the other hand, the Vulgate and some Oriental versions, as well as Theophyl. and Oec., have that addition, which is evidently borrowed: σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν is from chap. xxvi. 14, and εἶπον δέ· τί ποιήσω κύριε is from chap. xxii. 10. All Codd. begin ver. 6 with ἀλλά.

Ver. 8. Most MSS., some versions and fathers, have οὐδένα, as in the textus receptus. But still οὐδέν is to be preferred, which has B., the Sinaitic MS., and some versions for it; also it stood originally in A., and was corrected by a later hand into οὐδένα. It is highly probable that the correction arose from μηδένα in ver. 7.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.*—Saul set out on his journey, and had almost accomplished it. He was already near its termination, not far from the city of Damascus,

when a sudden appearance arrested him and cast him to the ground. A light from heaven suddenly shone around him (*περιήστραψεν*), as unexpected, as powerful, and as blinding as a flash of lightning. It is evident, however, that actual lightning is not here adverted to; but the appearance of the light is by the verb only compared with lightning. *Περί* in composition gives us to understand that the light enclosed Saul round about, and not only him, but also his attendants. According to what follows in vers. 17 and 27 (*Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι, ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ εἶδε τὸν κύριον*; compare chap. xx. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 8), Saul saw Jesus Himself in the heavenly glory, though this is not expressed in the context.

2. *And he fell to the earth and heard a voice.*—Violently agitated by the overwhelming power of the heavenly appearance, and seized with terror, Saul fell to the ground, saw nothing further, but heard a voice which addressed him, and to which he answered. It was the Lord Jesus who spoke to him. The address consisted of these words: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" These, according to chap. xxvi. 14, were spoken in the Hebrew dialect, with which also the circumstance corresponds, that the name here is not in the Greek form, but in the Hebrew abbreviation. The interrogatory particle *τί* calls him to account concerning the motive of persecution, as Chrysostom beautifully interprets it: *τί παρ' ἐμοῦ μέγα ἢ μικρὸν ἠδικημένος ταῦτα ποιεῖς;* which reminds us of the noble answer of Polycarp to the Roman proconsul on the demand that he should curse Christ: "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has never injured me: how then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?" The question accordingly lays hold on the conscience, and is intended to awaken in Saul the feeling of the great wrong he is doing.

3. *Who art Thou, Lord?*—Saul has not yet recognised Jesus; he must first inquire; although the idea who it is must have flashed through his conscience on the address. The answer of the Lord, which in the contrast between *ἐγώ* and *σύ* has a perceptible emphasis, is perhaps not to be referred to the first address, in the sense, I whom thou persecutest am Jesus (Bengel); but is a direct answer to the question of Saul, Who art Thou? and means, I who appear to thee and address thee am Jesus whom thou persecutest. And there is something deeply hum-

bling in this, because Jesus is great, exalted, and appearing from heaven; whilst Saul is a man, poor, weak, and easily cast down.

4. *But arise and go into the city.*—With ἀλλά the address of Jesus turns from the past to the future: the old has passed away, now shall the new become. Jesus speaks forthwith as the Lord who has to command Saul, who will impart to him directions, and who reckons upon his obedience. Saul would not have known what now to do; but he was to go to the city, and to wait for direction of what he does not yet know, nor does he know by whom the direction was to be brought. The passive λαληθήσεται is designedly chosen.

5. *But the men who journeyed with him stood speechless.*—The companions, who probably at the command of the high priest had made the journey with Saul to assist at the arrest and escort of the Christians of Damascus, stood speechless and stunned (ἐννεός frequently indicates both at once, primitively only dumb, also often ἐκπεπληγμένος). What made such a peculiarly bewildering and stupifying impression on Saul's fellow-travellers was the circumstance, that they indeed heard the voice, but saw no one from whom the voice proceeded. Paul himself, when he (Acts xxii. 9) speaks of this point, says of his attendants, that they τὴν φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν τοῦ λαλοῦντός μοι, which at first sight appears to contradict ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς, and has latterly been made the most of by criticism. Now, certainly all such attempts at reconciliation which distinguish φωνή in the two passages are in vain; whether that φωνῆς is here to be referred to the words of Paul, whereas in chap. xxii. 9 it is called φωνὴν τοῦ λαλοῦντός μοι (Oecum., Beza, and others); or whether that φωνή here means inarticulate sound, whilst on the other hand in chap. xxii. 9 it signifies articulate words (Rosenmüller, Heinrichs, and others). Both suppositions are opposed to the context. But there is an essential distinction between what Paul and what his companions heard; and whilst in chap. xxii. 9 Paul means that his companions heard not the voice of Him that spake to him, that is, did not clearly hear His words, His discourse, thus did not understand what He said to Saul: in chap. ix. 7, it is only said they heard the voice, which might well be without a definite comprehension of the words which the Lord said to Saul. Along with this it is also to be observed that ἀκούειν in our passage, not as in chap. xxii. 9, is constructed with the accu-

sative, a distinction which the editors of Stephan's Thesaurus Linguæ Græcæ thus characterize: *Genetivus maxime poni videtur in re, quam in genere audimus, aut ex parte tantum, aut incerto aliquo modo—Accusativus proprie rem certius definitam indicare cogitandus est.* Accordingly, Bengel might be right when he says: *Audiebant vocem solam, non vocem cum verbis.* The objection of Meyer to this, that in both passages hearing and seeing are simply opposed, is not to the point, and by no means proves that the two hearings were one and the same, as little as were the two seeings; for, in chap. ix. 7, the sight of a person is denied, whereas in chap. xxii. 9 the seeing of the light is asserted. This, as Baumgarten strikingly observes, is common to both accounts, that Paul received a definite impression, but his companions an indefinite one.

A second difference in the accounts is, that in chap. ix. 9, the companions stood, whilst, on the other hand, in chap. xxvi. 14 they, as well as Paul, fell to the ground. This has also been regarded as an irreconcilable contradiction, and inferences have been drawn from it prejudicial to the credibility of Luke. But it is well to observe that in chap. xxvi. 14, *πάντων δὲ καταπεσόντων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν γῆν* occurs at the instant of the sudden flashing of the light, when the voice of Jesus first addressed Saul; whereas in chap. ix. 9 the standing speechless of the companions is spoken of during the continuance of the conversation between Jesus and Saul. In other words, chap. xxvi. 14 speaks of an earlier period, and our passage of a later: and it is not allowable to press the term *εἱστήκεισαν*, as that it, as the pluperfect, means, they had stood, or remained standing; because, as the perfect *ἕστηκα* has a present import, so the pluperfect *εἱστήκειν* possesses an imperfect import. Moreover, it is not the standing of the men which is the chief thing to be expressed, but only their standing speechless, their being panic-struck, although we must not certainly go so far as entirely to overlook the posture of standing. Assuredly no one would from our passage, taken by itself, infer anything else, than that the companions from the first remained standing; but as the later passage informs us that they, as well as Saul, fell down at the sudden appearance of the light, it is entirely conceivable (with Bengel, Kuinoel, and Baumgarten), what is certainly nowhere expressly said, that the companions of Saul recovered from their fright

sooner than himself, and rose up. Saul like them was also at first struck to the ground, and remained lying there as one paralysed, as the voice addressing him immediately spoke; the others recovered so much the more easily and sooner, as they did not feel themselves personally concerned, though they heard a voice but did not understand the words. Such an idea is not arbitrary, as Meyer judges, as it has its points of defence in the parallel passages, and there is nothing opposed to its probability.

6. *But when he opened his eyes, he saw nothing.*—In conformity with the given command, Saul arose from the ground; but when he had opened his hitherto closed eyes, he could not see, and remained in this condition three days. That condition was of this nature, that he could open his eyes, but could not see (*οὐδὲν ἔβλεπε* denies objectively; *μὴ βλέπων* is distinguished from it not logically, but only grammatically (Winer), because the negation is connected with the participle, and is only less strong than *οὐ βλέπων*, which would express complete blindness, and this Luke does not intend, because the circumstance is not to be regarded as a divine punishment). This passing blindness, yet continued for some days, was, without doubt, caused by the dazzling light connected with the appearance of Jesus: though a peculiar divine influence must be supposed, because the companions who had seen the light were not similarly blinded. They could conduct him to the city, whilst they led him, as one blind, by the hand. During these three days, Saul abstained from all meat and drink: occupied with himself and the state of his soul, and in expectation of what the Lord would make known to him, he prepared himself for it by fasting and prayer.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Not until he came near Damascus, before the gates of the city, is Saul arrested and awakened by Christ. The danger of the Christians in Damascus was pressing, the enemy was at the gate; but where need is greatest, God is nearest. Saul had reached the termination of his journey, where he thought to celebrate a triumph of his zeal; but even there the Lord triumphs over him.

2. The essential point of this occurrence before Damascus was, that Jesus appeared personally to Saul: first He made

Himself seen in the light from heaven, like lightning shining round about Saul; and then immediately He addressed him when fallen to the ground, reproving the persecution, making Himself known, and directing Saul to the city, where the will of God would be further revealed to him. The first and strongest impression was: *Jesus lives.* Saul persecutes the disciples, on the supposition that Jesus of Nazareth, after He was crucified as a malefactor and blasphemer, remained in the state of the dead. But now Jesus personally appears to him, and causes Himself to be recognised by the light, the words, and the address, so that Saul receives a direct and personal knowledge, and an incontestable certainty that Jesus, although He was dead, yet lives: the Crucified One lives. That the Redeemer lives, is a fundamental truth of Christianity. We have not a Saviour who once lived, who was; but who is, and is to come (Rev. i. 4, where with design ὁ ὤν precedes ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος). Christ is ὁ ζῶν, Rev. i. 18. And what Saul here witnessed, the living Christ, that also was a chief subject of his preaching, a chief point of his doctrine.

3. Further, Saul, by the appearance, received a powerful impression of *the glory of Christ in His exaltation.* The light which, with the rapidity and brightness of lightning, shone round about him, was a light from heaven, the glory which encircles God. And in this glory Jesus appeared to Saul in such a way that he immediately fell to the ground (together with his companions, chap. xxvi. 14), and remained blinded for several days. And the voice with which Jesus addresses him has in it something overwhelming: he immediately feels the pre-eminence, the glory of the Person who appears, and is compelled to bow and submit. In short, Jesus not only lives, but lives exalted in heaven, lives and rules in divine glory. Everything extraordinary and miraculous in the whole appearance likewise testifies of the glory of Christ in His exaltation.

4. Saul has (as is manifest both from vers. 17, 27, and from his own explanations, 1 Cor. xv. 8) in this appearance seen Jesus, heard His voice, and spoken with Him. It was not a dream, not an exclusively subjective transaction, not a spiritual manifestation; but an actual appearance in the world of sense, visible and audible. Jesus appeared personally to Saul in His glorified body, as a true man, as that same Jesus who was on

earth, and yet is in divine glory from heaven. This experience testifies to the continued humanity of the glorified Redeemer, and to His glorified body. From this living experience, Paul has originally and chiefly drawn his deep knowledge and his doctrine of the spiritual-corporeal phases of life, of the glorification of corporeality, of the resurrection of the body, etc.

5. The most intimate living fellowship of Jesus with His disciples, and of them with Him, is represented both in the address, "Why persecutest thou Me?" and in the reply, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Saul thought only to persecute the Christians, these fanatical sectaries, apostates from the tradition of the fathers, without head or shepherd: with Jesus of Nazareth Himself, who was dead, he had, as he supposed, nothing to do. But now Jesus Himself appears to him and testifies, "Thou persecutest Me:" not simply My disciples, but Myself. Thus their sufferings are His sufferings: we cannot separate them from Him, and imagine, I mean only them, not Himself; He is united with His own in a living fellowship, so that He suffers, is reviled, and persecuted in and with them. And His exaltation and glory are for their good: He rules for the protection of His people and the terror of His enemies.—The union of Christ with Christians, the living fellowship, and the most intimate relation between the Lord and believers; that the Church of Christ is the body of which He is the Head: this great truth, which the Apostle Paul especially has clearly and deeply comprehended and doctrinally developed, lies in its foundation and germ in this appearance of Jesus which was made to Saul at Damascus.

6. But especially this impression must have powerfully affected him,—"Thus have I persecuted Himself, however little I imagined it—sinned against Him. He is exalted to heaven, invested with irresistible power, justified in demanding the most profound obedience, and I have striven against Him. Notwithstanding, He has come to me not in judgment, not crushing, not in anger and wrath, but with compassion and love, arresting the erring on his way, recalling me from my erroneous path, yea (this lay in the call to be the apostle of the Gentiles, occurring a few days after), entrusting to me a sacred work." This was grace, unmerited, free, merciful grace toward the sinner. By the light of grace, the greatness of his guilt, the depth of his sinful-

ness, first became clear to Saul. And the depth of his error has, on the other hand, made fully manifest to him the height and glory of grace. The impression was humiliating, yet elevating. The falling down to the ground, and the rising again rendered possible by the encouraging command of Jesus, was a sign of what occurred in his soul. Thus both sin and grace were made evident to him by personal experience; and indeed grace as the superior power. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Rom. v. 20). Therefore sin and grace are to the apostle the two poles of the Gospel, round which everything in the divine economy revolves.

7. Hitherto Saul had persecuted the disciples of Jesus because he saw in them, not only the fanatical and erring votaries of Jesus of Nazareth, but also men who honour not the sanctuary of Israel, the law, and the traditions, as it behoved them. He was a zealot for the traditions of the fathers (*ζηλωτὴς τῶν πατρικῶν παραδόσεων*, Gal. i. 14). And as such a zealot, he declared war against those who, as he thought, were apostates from Jehovah and His law. When he took pleasure in the death of Stephen, when he did what he could to destroy the Church of Jesus, he thought that this was a good and righteous work, on which the divine pleasure would rest. But now, by the appearance of Jesus from heaven, the divine displeasure is made known in a terrible manner. His whole former activity must now appear to him in a very different light. What he had regarded as a virtuous work, as the highest merit, is in reality, and in the sight of God, a sin, a fighting against the Lord's Anointed, and therefore against God Himself, a heinous crime. And the Christians are accordingly, not apostates, but, on the contrary, the children of God and the favourites of the Highest.—Thus must his view of the law, and of the righteousness of the law, have been completely changed.

8. With irresistible power the appearance of Jesus affected Saul. He is fallen to the earth and feels himself at the mercy of a higher power, entirely dependent on Him who appeared to him. But it is another question, whether this revelation of Jesus was *gratia irresistibilis* or not? Olshausen has thought that the question must be answered in the affirmative; and, in point of fact, the words of the Lord, *σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν* (certainly not genuine in this passage, but genuine

in Acts xxvi. 14), give a certain appearance of irresistibility, but no more. For in the same connection where Paul relates those words, he also observes that he was not *ἀπειθής* to the heavenly vision, by which the freedom of will, the independence of his obedience, which he might refuse, is evidently supposed. Not a single trace in the occurrence itself points to an irresistible change of the will. And the Apostle Paul never at a later period speaks of his conversion, in such a way as to deny the freedom of his determination to follow the intimation given to him. However unrestrained, grace works, yet it works only on a free personality, which may either receive the grace or reject it. Saul has the choice to give himself up to the impression which the appearance of Jesus made on him, to open his heart yet more deeply to it, or to close it. But the former, the willingness to surrender himself, is evident in the question, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

9. The most important part of the occurrence was not that which was external, but that which was internal. However miraculous the sensible appearance was, yet the revelation of Jesus to the spirit of Saul is the decisive miracle. The apostle himself thus regards the occurrence. It is true he relates more than once in his Epistles that he had seen the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 8); but where he goes most deeply into the event, he describes the centre of the occurrence as an internal *ἀποκάλυψις* (*εὐδόκησεν ὁ Θεὸς—ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί*). If the main point of the whole transaction had consisted in what was presented to the senses in the light and sound, then the companions of Saul, in their healthy senses, might and must have perceived just as much as Saul himself. But they receive only an indefinite and confused impression both of the visible appearance and of the address of Jesus, and no definite, clear, and just perception: evidently because their souls were not susceptible, and because the manifestation of Jesus was not simply a sensible, but also a spiritual—a spiritual-corporeal manifestation.

10. The passing blindness of Saul was not designed by God to be a sign of his hitherto moral blindness (as is generally supposed), but was to exclude him from the external world, to allow of a period of internal digestion of the decisive transaction which had taken place, to isolate him that he might be alone with his God and Saviour. Thus the circumstance is to

be regarded not as a punishment, but rather an aid and favour. Paul, during these three days, abstained from food and drink. This fasting and bodily preparation, not legally enjoined, but entirely voluntary, and arising from his internal emotions, and also truly evangelical, referred to the divine intimation which he was to expect (ver. 6). From ver. 11, we learn that prayer was also united with fasting.

For Homiletical Hints, see below.

C.

The Conversion of Saul completed in Damascus by Ananias.

Chap. ix. 10–19.

10 But there was a disciple at Damascus, named Ananias. To him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias! And he said, Here am I, Lord. 11 And the Lord said to him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth; 12 And has seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hand on him, that he might again receive his sight. 13 But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to Thy saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke Thy name. 15 But the Lord said to him, Go hence, for he is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show to him how much he must suffer for My name's sake. 17 Then Ananias went, and came to the house, and laid his hands on him, and said, Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, even Jesus, who appeared to thee on the way as thou camest, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales: and he received sight, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And he took food, and was strengthened.

Ver. 10. Ἐν ὁράματι ὁ κύριος is better attested than ὁ κύρ. ἐν ὁράματι.

Ver. 11. Lachmann has adopted ἀνάστα from B.; but the participle ἀναστάς is here, as well as in chap. x. 13, decidedly attested.

Ver. 12. Ἐν ὁράματι before ἄνδρα is awanting in A. and some versions, and has properly been omitted by Tischendorf and Lachmann: it is taken from ver. 10 for the sake of explanation.—Instead of χεῖρα, which is in G.H., some versions, and fathers, A. and C. have χεῖρας, B. and E. τὰς χεῖρας, taken from ver. 17, where there is no difference of reading. Certainly the plural is the more usual form, and therefore a correction of the singular.

Ver. 13. Ἀκήκοα is only attested by G.H., whilst ἤκουσα is found in A.B.C.E.

Ver. 16. Αὐτόν, instead of αὐτῷ, is not strongly attested.

Ver. 18. The textus receptus has, on the authority of E.G., inserted παραχρῆμα after ἀνέβλεψέ τε, which is awanting in A.B.C.H. and many cursive MSS., and is evidently an interpolation.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But there was a disciple at Damascus, named Ananias.*—The manner in which Ananias is introduced gives us evidently to understand, that neither was Ananias previously known to Saul, nor Saul to Ananias. At least it is evident from ver. 13 that Ananias knew Saul only by hearsay. From the description of Saul, with the mention of his origin from Tarsus, as well as from the word ὀνόματι, "by name," it follows that Ananias knew nothing personally of Saul. And in like manner, the definite naming of Ananias (ver. 12) shows that he was unknown to Saul: if this were not the meaning of the historian, it would have been much simpler to have put, instead of ἄνδρα ὀνομ. Ἀν., simply σέ. If it is thought that there was not only a mutual acquaintance, but even an intimate friendship between them (Eichhorn and others), this idea does not arise in consequence of any trace of it in our section, but in contradiction to it. Ananias was, as his genuine Hebrew name shows, a Jewish Christian. Luke names him here simply μαθητής τις, without distinguishing his person. According to chap. xxii. 12, he was a devout man, according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews who dwelt there. Therefore, even after his conversion, zealous in legal piety, and on that account standing in high reputation and favour with all the Jews at Damascus.

2. *To him spake the Lord in a vision.*—The Lord who appeared to him was not God the Father, but the Lord Jesus Christ, for Ananias names Christians (ver. 14) those who invoke the name of the Lord, where ὄνομά σου can only refer to Jesus, and not to Jehovah in distinction from Jesus: so also τὸ ὄνομά μου (vers. 15, 16). Whether the vision which was imparted to Ananias took place when he was awake or in a dream, cannot be collected from the passage; for even ἀναστὰς πορεύθητι does not suppose that we are to think of Ananias on his bed, but only that he was quietly at home. He should set out; go to a definite street, to a certain house, and there inquire for Saul, who is exactly described to him, and who was in the act of prayer. The street is called Straight, without doubt to distinguish it from

the other streets, which were mostly winding and crooked in the old city. Wilson, in "The Lands of the Bible," mentions that at present there is a street at Damascus known by this name. Indeed, in this street the house of Judas is even pointed out; where tradition goes a little too far.

3. *For, behold, he prayeth.*—The Lord points out the reason to Ananias why he sends him to Saul, and wherefore at this precise time. Because (*γάρ*) Saul was even at that very moment in the act of prayer, and therefore was wanting an answer to his requests, a fulfilment of his earnest desire, and was consequently susceptible. This is one reason: another is the circumstance, that Saul had already in a vision seen a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him. The vision had been imparted to Saul some time before, and now in consequence of it he prays (*προσεύχεται* pres., *εἶδεν—εἰσελθόντα καὶ ἐπιθέντα* aor.). *Ὅπως ἀναβλέψῃ* causes Ananias to suppose that Saul was at this time deprived of sight. But without doubt the revelation of the Lord to Ananias is in our narrative given only summarily, not fully; for we must necessarily suppose that it is in the vision likewise imparted to Ananias, that Jesus had appeared to Saul by the way, and also that by the laying on of the hands of Ananias the Holy Ghost was imparted to him. This follows undoubtedly from ver. 17, *Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ᾗ ἤρχου*, and from *πλησθῇς πνεύματος ἁγίου*.

4. *But Ananias answered.*—Similarly as Moses, when the Lord appeared to him at Horeb and sent him to Egypt (Ex. iii. 11), and as Jeremiah (Jer. i. 6) refused to receive and execute the message, so Ananias here expresses himself doubtfully and in fear, and indeed with childlike openness and simplicity. He unfortunately knows the name of Saul but too well, and that as an enemy of the disciples of Jesus. Ananias has heard *ἀπὸ πολλῶν* of this man as a persecutor. Those from whose mouth he had received the information were, doubtless, chiefly such as had fled from Jerusalem, and might have come to Damascus. We also perceive from this expression that Ananias was not himself a fugitive Christian from Jerusalem (for then he would not know it only at second hand), but without doubt was resident at Damascus. But where did he learn that Saul brought authority from the chief priests (plur. *τῶν ἀρχιερέων*, by which probably the high priest in office with the former high priests

and the Sanhedrim are meant) to arrest the Christians? It is quite possible that the Christians at Jerusalem, to whom the departure of Saul, his object, and his authority could not have remained unknown, informed their acquaintances at Damascus by writing or messengers, that they might take precautions. As this was at least the third day since the arrival of Saul in the city, the Christians there could quite easily have received information.

5. *Go hence, for he is a chosen vessel unto Me.*—The Lord simply insists on the command, but He sets at ease his anxious servant by telling him that Saul will not only do no more mischief to the Church, but that he was even chosen by the Lord Himself to defend His honour, and to spread the confession of His blessed name. Σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς is a chosen vessel, an instrument, an organ for the purpose τοῦ βαστάσαι to carry My name, that is, to spread by word and deed the knowledge and confession of Jesus, as the Redeemer and Messiah. The circles of humanity to which Saul was to carry the name of Jesus are three: 1. ἔθνη: this cannot here denote nations in general, as the υἱοὶ Ἰσραήλ are afterwards expressly distinguished from them, but only the heathen nations; 2. βασιλεῖς, ruling lords, princes; 3. υἱοὶ Ἰσραήλ. The ἔθνη are placed first and Israel last, because Saul's office of witnessing in the first place respects the heathen world, and should find in this its sphere of operation. Israel is not excluded from this sphere of operation, but comes into consideration only in the second instance. By this word of the Lord, Saul is evidently marked out as the apostle of the Gentiles, only the name "apostle" is not expressly conferred on him. The next sentence does not contain, as one would at first expect, the reason of the statement that Saul is a chosen instrument (Meyer), but the reason annexed to πορεύου: "Go hence, for (you will have nothing more to fear from him, you will have nothing to suffer from him; on the contrary) I will show to him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." Ὑποδείξω is not to be considered as a prophetic revelation (De Wette), but as an intimation which would be fulfilled in fact and by experience. Ὅσα δεῖ αὐτὸν παθεῖν appears to be an allusion to the words of Ananias, ὅσα κακὰ ἐποίησε τοῖς ἁγίοις σου.

6. *Then Ananias went, and came to the house.*—Ananias im-

mediately obeys: he went and came to the house indicated to him. The address, "Brother Saul," is not grounded only or chiefly on Jewish descent and nationality, but on their fellowship and relationship in Christ, which was already certain by the word of the Lord to Ananias. With tender love, comforting him and awakening confidence, he addresses the still humbled man as a messenger of God, who should restore him to sight, and communicate the gift of the Holy Ghost. What Christ in the vision had imparted for his encouragement on account of his fears, Ananias does not appear immediately to have communicated to Saul; and in this he has done well and acted with Christian tact, for, as Bengel expresses it, *Sauli non erat scire, quanti ipse jam esset.*

7. *And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales.*— This is not to be understood as if objectively a scaly substance had been loosened from the pupil of his eyes (Bengel and Meyer), but only the subjective impression of Saul appears to be described: it was to him as if there fell something like scales from his eyes, in consequence of which he could again see; and this happened suddenly, after Ananias had laid his hands upon him. It is evident to every impartial mind, from the whole narrative, and also from εὐθέως, that this circumstance is to be considered as a miraculous and supernatural effect. Immediately Saul was baptized by Ananias: wherein ἀναστάς does not suppose that he lay upon his bed, or that he knelt and continued in a praying attitude; but it most probably only intimates the quick transition from experience and reception to independent action. After Saul had been baptized, and indeed probably in one of the rivers praised by Naaman, Amana or Pharphar, he broke his fast and took bread; so that he quickly recovered (ἐνίσχυσεν designedly, the aor. not impf., a word which occurs in the sense of recovery from sickness). He seems from this to have declined in strength by the miraculous appearance, terrifying him and weakening his bodily powers, taken in connection with his three days' fast and his internal struggles.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. In this section the proper agent is none other than Christ Himself, the exalted and sovereign Lord of His kingdom. Ananias is only the messenger who is commissioned and sent to

speak and to do what he was commanded. But it is Jesus Christ who makes both the will and the performance. Even as with the terrifying commencement of the conversion, so here also the heavenly Redeemer Himself personally and really interfered in the progress and completion of the conversion of Saul. By a vision he sends Ananias to Saul, who is likewise prepared for the visit by a vision. By an extraordinary and miraculous appearance was Saul awakened, and by an extraordinary revelation also is he completely converted. He was called and settled in the ministry by the Lord Himself, not by man; a fact which Paul, as the apostle of the Gentiles, has maintained with good reason.

2. In the appearance before the city, Christ directly manifested Himself to Saul in the light and by the word: in the city, He has only indirectly spoken with him and worked on him by Ananias. What at the beginning was purely a supernatural effect, was gradually to pass over to the natural course of divine providence. Here the communication and the curative effect by the instrumentality of a man is the transition. Saul likewise, after the Lord Himself had arrested him in his career as a persecutor, and had manifested Himself to him, was to be united with the Church of Christ and implanted into the body of Christ: for this purpose the Redeemer employs one of His disciples in the name of all. He ministers to him in word and deed, with the imposition of hands, baptism, and the word.

3. Ananias was not an apostle, but a disciple: that is to say, a simple member of the Church, entrusted neither with the ministry nor with any other office. That precisely such a one was sent by the Lord to Saul, was wisely ordained. Had an apostle, as Peter, been sent to him, not only might Saul have been tempted to pride, but he would have been regarded as dependent on human authority, his apostolic office and work would have been considered as subordinate to that of the other apostles; whereas he was to be entirely independent. This Paul often insists upon, when he asserts that he was an apostle, not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ (Gal. i. 1 and other places).

4. In a christological point of view it is important to observe that Ananias, in his answer to Christ, calls the disciples of Jesus not only *οἱ ἐπικαλούμενοι τὸ ὄνομά σου* (ver. 14), but also *οἱ ἅγιοί σου* (ver 13). *Ἐπικαλεῖσθαι ὄνομα* is in the LXX., and so

also here, the Greek expression for קָרָא בְּשֵׁם, by which it is implied that Christians invoked Jesus, directed prayer to Him, as the Israelites did to Jehovah, their covenant God. When, further, Ananias designates Christians as the saints of the Lord Jesus, he again uses an expression which in the Old Covenant could only refer to Jehovah. If Christ has His saints, then by this expression divine honour is ascribed to Him. Christians are, according to this idea, men who stand in an intimate and essential relation to Jesus Christ, as a divine person; and as He is holy, so they by their fellowship with Him are also consecrated. Thus then both ideas, *οἱ ἐπικαλούμενοι τὸν κύριον* and *οἱ ἅγιοι αὐτοῦ*, point to the divinity of Christ.

5. Imposition of hands occurred in chap. viii. 17 as the medium of the communication of the Spirit: here it is chiefly mentioned only as the medium of the restoration of Saul to sight. But it is sufficiently evident that the gift of the Holy Ghost was likewise communicated by the imposition of hands. And besides, it consists entirely with the nature of this action, as being in the first instance a corporeal, but also a spiritual action, that it can operate not only spiritually, but also, and in the first instance, corporeally.—It is further worthy of remark, that Ananias, as a simple Christian, performs the imposition of hands and imparts the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus this function is not absolutely and exclusively united to the ministry, much less to apostolic authority. It is God who imparts His Spirit, not man; He distributes the gifts of His Spirit to whom He will and how He will; He is not bound to any human or ecclesiastical medium, but remains unrestrained and perfectly absolute in this matter.

6. Only by baptism, which he received, was the work of Saul's conversion completed, his regeneration and engrafting into Christ consummated. The question arises, How is the baptism of the Spirit related to the baptism of water? The actual filling of Saul with the Holy Ghost is not in express terms mentioned, either before or after his baptism; and De Wette has thought it remarkable that only the bodily restoration, but not the ensuing filling with the Holy Ghost, is noticed. But from the whole context, it is necessarily to be supposed that the filling of Saul with the Holy Ghost, as certainly as his restoration to sight, resulted immediately on the imposition of the hands of Ananias. Ananias mentions both in the same sentence from the words of

Jesus, as the object of his mission; and if the bodily gift resulted εὐθέως (ver. 18), we must suppose that the spiritual gift likewise accompanied the imposition of the hands. If this were the case, then the baptism of the Spirit preceded the baptism of water. Though this was not the rule (chap. ii. 33), yet is everything which God does a higher rule and ordinance; and it is wrong to think that God Himself is bound to an ordinance, although we are bound to it. Thus also with baptismal instruction: Ananias has imparted none to Saul, although, as a rule, such must take place with proselytes; but here all further preparation for baptism was in fact superfluous, as repentance and faith in Jesus Christ had been directly awakened and effected by Himself. Thus, as Erasmus says, *Paulus Jesum habuerat catechistam.*

7. Saul was called to be the apostle of the Gentiles. It is true in our section the name of apostle was not conferred on him, and indeed in the Acts generally Paul only once receives the title of apostle, and that too along with Barnabas (chap. xiv. 14); yet the calling of Saul is evidently and strikingly described as that of the apostle of the Gentiles. Without doubt it was communicated to him by Ananias, that he was destined by the Lord to be the bearer of His name among the Gentiles. Paul himself mentions the purpose of God, that he should preach the Gospel among the heathen, in direct connection with his calling and conversion (Gal. i. 16). And he relates to Herod Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 17), that his mission to the Gentiles was immediately revealed to him, mentioning that as the direct word of Jesus Himself, which was doubtless communicated to him by Ananias. Paul was likewise, by the completion of his conversion, called to be the apostle to the Gentiles, not with exclusive limitation to the Gentile world, but with special reference to it. In so far Paul does not stand in one and the same order with the original apostles, as a thirteenth, or, as some think, a twelfth in place of Judas Iscariot, inasmuch as the choice of Matthias, it is alleged, was rash and invalid before God. These are chiefly apostles for Israel, Paul is chiefly the apostle for the Gentile world. But, in apostolic origin and dignity, he is not inferior to them. They were directly chosen, called, and installed in office by Jesus; Paul was so also; only they were called by the Redeemer in His state of humiliation, but Paul by Him in His

state of exaltation. They were, as eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses, to testify of Jesus; so also was Paul (chap. xxii. 15, xxvi. 16), and he himself always lays the greatest stress, for the sake of the independence and reality of his apostolic dignity, on this, that he was called of God, not of man, and directly by Jesus Christ, not by man (Gal. i. 1).

8. *On the whole history of Saul's conversion.*—How are we to understand it? It is well known that it has been regarded, partly as a natural occurrence, and partly as an unhistorical embellishment of a myth: both views proceed from the supposition of the impossibility of a miracle in general, that is, of a direct interposition of God in nature and history. Both suppositions arise from naturalism, and differ only in the method they adopt. The one interprets the narrative given in the Bible as a purely natural transaction; the other leaves to the biblical narrative its miraculous meaning, and so far with a more candid sense of truth, but refers the history to alleged embellishment, that is, to distortion of fact by myth and tradition. The natural explanation (whose supporters are named by Meyer) generally considers a thunder-storm and a previous internal state of mind as the co-operating conditions; that Saul, earnestly taken up with Christ and His Church, agitated by the impression made on him by the death of Stephen, imagined he saw in the lightning the appearance of Jesus, and heard in the rolling thunder the words of Jesus, and was thereupon completely led over to Christianity by Ananias, with whom he was previously acquainted, and also his blinded sight was restored. With this the latest formed supposition of Ewald agrees in essentials. He holds that a deadly burning wind with irresistible force cast Paul and his companions to the ground, and that at the same time he was thrown into a violent state of excitement, so that he saw Christ in the appearances of the air coming down upon him from heaven, and, lying on the ground, heard the threatening words of the heavenly One. But with these representations we must, 1. invent these natural conditions and circumstances, both in the soul of Saul and in the external world, without the narrative before us affording any connecting link; 2. we must deny, or at least tacitly lay aside, what the Bible itself, here and in parallel passages, positively, unmistakeably, and with one accord testifies, as the kernel of the event, namely, the reality of an appearance

of the glorified Redeemer. As regards the first, there is no hint in the words of Luke of lightning and thunder, of a storm, of a simoon; and when Saul is imagined to be in a state of mental doubt and deep strife of conscience, moved by the observations and experiences which he had made on Stephen and other Christians whom he had persecuted, prior to the vision on the way to Damascus, not the least indication of this is found in the narrative; on the contrary, we are clearly given to understand that Saul continued in a fanaticism entirely unbroken, by no means in a frightened state of feeling and mind, when the vision brought him suddenly to consideration and conversion. With this everything agrees which Paul himself states in his Epistles concerning his conversion and his mental state. And the character of the man, who was ever thoroughly in earnest, contradicts beforehand the supposition of internal vacillation,—of a certain indecision of mind. As regards the second remark, the reality of the objective appearance of Christ is the kernel of the transaction, not only in the Acts of the Apostles, but in Paul's own Epistles, so often as the fact of his conversion is mentioned; and to explain the whole historically established transformation of the apostle, apart from the appearance of Christ as an objective reality, is not only doing violence to the testimonies before us, but also an opinion which converts into an airy phantom one of the greatest and most important occurrences of history, and makes the event more mysterious than the miracle itself. How is it conceivable that the actual appearance of Christ before Damascus, on which (along with what happened in the city) the conversion of Paul, his whole wonderful activity, his sufferings for the sake of Christ, and his entire doctrinal views essentially rested, should have been only the play of his imagination, in other words, enthusiastic self-deception and empty delusion? And how could Paul have obtained the respect and acknowledgment of the rest of the apostles and of the whole Church, not simply as a converted Christian, but as a commissioned agent of Christ, as an apostle, which was undeniably accorded to him, if his calling to the apostolic office was not certainly and undoubtedly real? We are beset on all sides with the most invincible doubts and difficulties, if, in spite of the above testimonies, we deny the reality of the appearance of the exalted Christ, and will yet imagine and maintain the

circumstances of the transaction as they are narrated. The conversion of Saul, and his calling to be an apostle of the Gentiles, cannot be understood as a purely natural development from his original disposition and former experiences, but only as a transformation which has its foundation in the miraculous interposition of God in the world of mind and in the powers of nature, namely, in a real appearance of the exalted Redeemer perceptible to the senses. No positive preparation or sowing of the seed, but merely such a condition as rendered this spiritual change on Saul possible was afforded—on the one hand, by his original moral state, inasmuch as uprightness of heart, decision of will, honest and faithful use of his knowledge, and fear of God were in him—and, on the other hand, by his previous knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth and of His Church.

HOMILÈTICAL HINTS.

But Saul yet breathing out threatenings (ver. 1). God often suffers man to go as far as his passions can drive him, that He may show from what a depth He is able to draw him out (Quesnel).—Our Lord God is such an artificer, that He has pleasure only in difficult masterpieces, and not in trifling pieces of work. Also He works with special pleasure from the block. Therefore He has from of old selected especially very hard wood and stones, in order to show His skill in them (Luther).

That he might bring them bound (ver. 2). False religion is bloodthirsty; the true Church suffers persecution (Starke).

And as he came near Damascus (ver. 3). When the proper moment has come, then no heart is so strong, even if it were as pure quartz or diamond, that it can hold out and avoid breaking (Luther).—At mid-day one sees no ghosts (Acts xxii. 6). Thus there is no possibility of this being a deception of the fancy (Williger).—When need is greatest, God is nearest: proved, 1. To Saul: when sin rose highest, the Lord snatched him back. 2. To the Christians at Damascus: when the enemy was even before the gate, the Lord called, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther.—*And suddenly there shone round about him a light from heaven.* Another light than that which shone around the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, and yet essentially the same: here also Christ was born in the night of a darkened heart.—A twofold light streams even now from heaven

into the heart on conversion: 1. The terrifying ray of the divine law. 2. The consolatory shining of evangelical grace.

And he fell to the ground (ver. 4). If we, proud and high-minded by nature, are to be helped, we must fall to the earth (Starke).—*Saul! Saul!* This repeated and impressive calling by name by the Lord (as Abraham! Abraham! Gen. xxii. 11; Samuel! Samuel! 1 Sam. iii. 10; Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Matt. xxiii. 27; Simon! Simon! Luke xxii. 31) reminds Saul: 1. Of the perversity of his heart. "It is very possible that by this forcible and emphatic repetition of his name, the conscience of Saul, who was a Benjamite like Saul the son of Kish, may have been strongly reminded of his resemblance in character to the rejected king of Israel. For just as the former with his men, driven by an evil spirit which had taken possession of him, went forth to seize and destroy the Lord's anointed, so had this man with his followers gone out full of murderous zeal to persecute and to put to death Christ, the Anointed, in His members" (Baumgarten). 2. Of the gracious designs of the Lord with him. Saul is with truth named "the asked of God." Jesus here reclaims this man as His property, of whom it thus holds good, "He shall have the strong for a prey."—*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* Jesus is far above all heavens, but He has His feet on the earth: the Head is in heaven and the body on earth. As now Saul smote and trod upon the feet, the Head cries, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? (Augustin).—God thus apprehends Saul in his sins, and reproaches him with the blood of His Christians, so that it were no wonder if Saul were instantly struck dead; for when this pierces the heart, and is placed before our eyes, that we have persecuted God, there will remain little comfort (Luther).—Saul persecuted Jesus, and Jesus persecuted Saul. Saul persecuted Jesus in wrath, and sought to root out His name, His word, and His Church. But Jesus persecuted him in mercy, and called to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? As if He would say: What have I done to thee? Wherein have I injured thee, that thou so eagerly persecutest and afflictest Me in My members? Behold, how easy were it for Me to destroy thee suddenly, and with a thunderbolt to cast thee into hell! I will not reward thee as thou hast merited. I have loved thee from eternity, I whom thou hitherto hast hated: I have shed My blood even for thee, although thou hast thirsted after the blood

of My saints. On this account Paul says, "I am apprehended of Christ" (Phil. iii. 12). When I least thought of it, when as a madman I ran to hell, my blessed Redeemer apprehended me, and plucked me as a brand from the burning. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him, to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 16), (Scriver).—How terrible must these words have been to Saul, Why persecutest thou Me? He had, in all his actions, only God's honour in view, and would expect indeed praise and approbation from heaven: and behold his work is cursed, his zeal for God is called a persecution of Jehovah; and this by the Lord Himself, whose words Saul recognises in the heavenly voice (Leonh. and Spieg.).

Who art Thou, Lord? (ver. 5). With this question, Saul takes a step forward. He inquires after God. He yielded to that providence which shut up his way with thorns, at least he did not strive against it.—Many of you stand on the same step of the inner life. Why persecutest thou Me? In piercing accents has this call pursued you. It arouses you in the morning, and disturbs you in the evening, accompanies you in your journeys, and embitters your dreams. You have a thorn in you, which you cannot get rid of: an excessive grief pervades your life, about which you are not clear to yourselves. You suspect that your salvation is connected in some mysterious manner with Christ, but you feel yourselves still separated from the Saviour. Inquire at least, "Who art Thou, Lord?" Ask in prayer, search the Scriptures, and the Lord will manifest Himself to you (Jaspis).—*I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* With these words, a terrible light dawns upon the apostle: 1. Concerning the Lord Jesus: (*a*) that He lives exalted in heaven; (*b*) that He is with His people on earth, and declares their sufferings to be His. 2. Concerning himself: (*a*) that he was, in sinful blindness, fighting against God; (*b*) that therefore he had laboured in vain.—*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* In this call, the law and the Gospel are united: 1. In the call, "Why persecutest thou Me?" the law, which reproaches Saul with His sins. 2. In the declaration, "I am Jesus," the Gospel, inasmuch as the Lord therein reveals and offers Himself to Saul as the Redeemer of the world, yea, as his

own Redeemer.—*I am Jesus.* We may experience something of what this name of Jesus was to the converted Saul for life, if we also have had an hour when for the first time such a declaration, "I am Jesus," pierces our hearts, so that we recognise our sins powerfully, but His grace more powerfully (Besser).—*It will be hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* Has He then compelled him to abstain from his previous acting? By no means: for almighty grace does not apprehend us against our wills, but it is even our will which it apprehends, so that we with joy willingly belong to it, because we have now recognised our salvation (Palmer).—*It will be hard for thee,* etc. A warning not to advance willingly against the overruling power. 1. The manner in which Saul received the warning: by means of an external miraculous occurrence indeed, but not without being internally apprehended and led to the way of truth. 2. What the meaning of this warning was: not that he should yield to external compulsion against his convictions; but this was to become clear to him to be foolishness, to which he should no longer yield, namely, that God has intended salvation only for the people of Israel and not for all; and he was not to resist the impulse to bring to others also the light which had arisen to himself, and thus to fulfil his calling as the apostle of the Gentiles (Schleiermacher).—*It will be hard for thee.* Who can step with naked feet into burning fire, or strike the diamond with his hand? Yet these words do not only show the powerlessness of all human resistance to God, but likewise they express the riches of divine mercy and grace; for, in truth, it is hard to extinguish the living coals of the love of God to His enemies with the determination: I will not be converted (Besser).

And he with fear and trembling said (ver. 6). The intense fear of this moment must have in a short period made up to Paul all those experiences which the other apostles received from many years' tarrying with Jesus in His temptations (Rieger).—The roaring lion is converted into a patient lamb, and the breathing of vengeance is changed into fear and trembling. Saul now becomes Paul, that is, "little," and must acknowledge, "Lord, Thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded: Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed," Jer. xx. 7. The fear and trembling is a sign of penitent contrition; but amid these legal terrors faith was already born

within him, for he immediately calls Jesus, persecuted by him, his Lord, whose will should henceforth rule his life (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The two life-questions of Christians.* 1. The question for knowledge: Lord, who art Thou? 2. The question for the will: Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?—*Go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* Paul afterwards received his apostolic status and preparation for his office from the Lord Himself, without human instruction; but he must become a Christian in the ordinary way, by the ministry of another (Rieger).—Although God speaks with Paul from heaven, yet He will not abolish the ministerial office or make an exception to any one; but He directs him to the city, to the pulpit or minister: there shall he hear and learn what he is to learn. For God will make an exception to no one, but gives His baptism and the Gospel to one as well as to another (Luther).

The men who journeyed with him (ver. 7). Saul's comrades in sin are obliged to be the witnesses of his conversion. The conversion of the man, whose fierce enmity against Christ had blazed afar as a firebrand, was not to happen in the lonely closet, but openly before many witnesses (Leonh. and Spieg.). —*Stood speechless.* Behold the effect of the Gospel! All hear it, but few comprehend it.—*The conversion of Saul reflects the image of every converted heart.* It shows: 1. The zeal and striving of the natural heart, and the Lord's voice, "Why persecutest thou Me?" 2. The question of the obstinate heart, "Who art Thou, Lord?" and the Lord's answer, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." 3. The question of the humbled heart, "What must I do?" and the Lord's answer, "Repent and believe on Me" (Florey).

And Saul arose from the earth (ver. 8). Not only sorrow and good purposes belong to conversion, but also active obedience (Starke).—*He saw nothing; but they led him by the hand and brought him.* The external miracle images step by step the internal conversion. The man who, before God cast him down to the ground, would lead all men, now himself requires a guide. He must be led as a child; his natural strength is broken, and he yields himself willingly to this guidance; the false light is extinguished in him, and, hungry and thirsty, he waits in darkness for the true light (Gerlach).—

And brought him to Damascus. He had not thought to have made such an entrance. He wished to lead out the Christians bound from Damascus, and now the Lord leads him as one bound into the city (Starke).

And he was three days without sight (ver. 9). The physical blindness was to be to him a blessed help, to aid him in earnestly contemplating the Saviour who had appeared to him, and in learning spiritually to know Him. Jesus glorified Himself in his heart, and therefore he must see nothing of men and the vanities around him (Apost. Past.).—We must become poor, before we are filled; blind, before we see (Starke).—These three days were a blessed period for inward collectedness. We often take days and weeks for a cure or a visit to our friends, neglecting our official and household duties: but who has even once devoted three days to intercourse with himself for the cure of his soul? (Rieger).—The chamberlain, the jailor, Cornelius, and others, had not to wait so long. But God found it good for Paul, in order to cure him thoroughly of his pharisaical pride and rooted aversion to the cross of Christ (Apost. Past.). —In these three days, Paul wrestled Jacob's fight with God, the fight which he himself describes (Rom. vii. 7–25).—*The three days' sepulture for the inward man.* 1. The old must pass away: the old light is gone; the old enjoyments are no longer palatable; the old activity is paralysed; the old friends are away. 2. The new is quietly preparing: a new light is kindling within; a new salvation is rising up to the soul; strength is collecting for a new calling; new friends are standing at the door.

But there was a disciple named Ananias (ver. 10). Saul appeared entirely forsaken during the three days of his blindness; but it was not so. The true Shepherd does not neglect His found sheep for a single instant, but has already prepared the instrument for raising him up. Thus, after the most wonderful conversion, God now leads Saul into the ordinary beaten tracks of the means of grace and way of salvation.—Ananias was no celebrated teacher, but a simple disciple. High gifts and great dignities do not belong to a successful ministry, but only faithful servants. But yet the choice of Ananias was a wise dispensation for Saul. The learned Pharisee, for his humiliation, was to receive an unlearned Christian for his teacher. If Peter or

some other great apostle had been sent to him, Saul might, on the one hand, have become proud, or, on the other hand, dependent on human authority.

Go hence (ver. 11). The short but comprehensive word of the Lord to His servant. 1. It demands absolute obedience. 2. It shames the doubts of his feeble courage. 3. It promises the Lord's assistance and blessing.—*The street which is called Straight* (Luther, "right"). God knows all streets, corners, and cellars, who dwells in them, what passes in them, yea, all thoughts (Starke).—The way which the Lord leads us is always the right way. "Thou leadest me in the right path" (Ps. xxiii.). It was so, 1. for Saul; 2. for Ananias.—*Behold, he prayeth!* A beautiful saying concerning a converted sinner: 1. To designate his spiritual condition: (*a*) he prays; thus he is no longer a blasphemer of Jesus, but lies beseeching the Lord whom he formerly persecuted: (*b*) he prays; thus he is no longer a persecutor of the Christians, but has thrown away his sword, and folds his weaponless arms in peace. 2. To turn loving hearts to him. (*a*) The Lord Himself looks down from on high, out of His sanctuary, with love upon the broken heart which lies before Him in prayer. (*b*) The Church of the Lord shall turn to him with tender pity, and shall no more avoid him as a lost one, and fear him as a dangerous one, of whom it is once said, Behold, he prayeth!

He prayeth, and hath seen a man (ver. 12). Wherefore does the Lord deal with Saul in so extraordinary a way by visions and direct revelations? 1. For the sake of his future apostolic office, that he might be able to say, I have received it from the Lord. 2. For the sake of his hitherto pharisaical mode of thought, that he may perceive that grace is no production of his own mental powers and carnal learning.—*And hath seen a man coming in, and putting his hand upon him.* Thus the ordinary means of grace yet remained the chief matter. Men with whom something extraordinary occurs, must still be directed to the word and the ministry. Christ Himself says to the ten lepers whom He healed by a miracle, Go and show yourselves to the priests (Apost. Past.).

Ananias answered, etc. (vers 13 and 14). A doubt arising partly from human weakness, which occurs even with the saints, and partly also from praiseworthy caution; for we must not trust

untested that which announces itself as an extraordinary revelation (Starke).

Go hence, for he is a chosen vessel unto Me (ver. 15). The mystery of divine election was greatly dwelt upon by St Paul in his preaching, because he himself was a masterpiece of the work of free grace in the hearts of lost sinners (Besser).—*He is a chosen vessel*, etc. An illustrious description of the evangelical ministry. 1. The divine authority on which it rests: "He is a chosen vessel unto Me." 2. The heavenly blessing which it brings: "To bear My name." 3. The wide sphere of labour which is pointed out to it: "Before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel." (None is so high and none is so low, inwardly or outwardly, but that the ministry has its message even for him).—*He is*, etc. Behold the wonderful power of divine grace! It makes first of a ravening wolf a peaceful lamb, and then a faithful shepherd: it first breaks off the point of the threatening spear of the persecutor, and then converts it into the shepherd's crook.

I will show him how much he must suffer (ver. 16). Ananias was only to be the messenger; the Lord Himself will do the rest. Ananias was only to announce grace to Saul; Jesus will then make him qualified for his office, and show him the way in which he should walk. He will reveal to him the approaching sufferings, and inspire his heart with courage and joy (Apost. Past.). —The more God has destined grace to a soul, the more also does He destine sufferings (Starke).

Then Ananias went, and came, and laid his hands, and said (ver. 17). How good is it for a teacher simply to follow the directions of the Lord! Ananias finds everything as the Lord has said: the house which He showed him, Saul to whom He sent him, the work which He pointed out to him, and the success which He promised him (Apost. Past.).—*Brother Saul*, etc. The address of Ananias, a model of pastoral wisdom. "Brother Saul:" see here the tender love, with which we ought to meet broken hearts. "The Lord has sent me:" see here the pointing to above, from which salvation and help are to come to the penitent sinner. "Who appeared to thee:" see here the encouraging reminding of the beginning already made of the work of grace. "In the way as thou camest:" a gentle mention of the old sinful way. "That thou mightest receive thy sight and

be filled with the Holy Ghost:" a comforting intimation of the glorious design of the gracious work of God.

And immediately there fell from his eyes as if it were scales (ver. 18). Many souls who go about to all celebrated pulpit orators to arrive at the assurance of salvation, require often only to go to a pious layman to receive light (Williger).—The enlightenment of a sinner consists in this, that the scales of self-conceit are removed from his understanding by the Holy Ghost, through the word and prayer, so that the heavenly light can stream into his soul (Starke).—How far a soul can advance in a few days if it will only be very obedient to grace! (Apost. Past.).

Arise and be baptized (ver. 19). Restoration to sight was not the chief object of the mission of Ananias, but only a precursor and earnest of the bestowal of salvation which was to take place by baptism (Leonh. and Spieg.).—Ananias rightly regards all instruction and preparation for baptism as superfluous. In this case an understanding of baptism in the name of Jesus has been prepared in a way such as never before had been, and as can never again occur (Baumgarten).—*Saul was certain days with the disciples.* Like and like associate together. After Paul was by baptism engrafted into Jesus, he is also incorporated into the fellowship of the members of the Church, first of all in order to receive strengthening of his new life and compensation for the lost friendship of the world, but soon in order to give and work independently for strengthening the Church and for the spread of the Gospel.

On the whole section.—Saul becomes Paul. 1. The last journey of Saul. 2. The great turning-point. 3. The beginning of Paul (Ahlfeld).—*The glory of Jesus in Paul's conversion:* inasmuch as He therein manifests, 1. His patience; 2. His mercy; 3. His power; and 4. His wisdom (Knapp).—*The glory of the calling grace of Christ in Paul's conversion.* "A pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to everlasting life." 1. Who was called? 2. How was he called? 3. How did he receive the call? (W. Hofacker).—*The miraculous conversion of Saul.* Miraculous: 1. as regards the man; 2. as regards the circumstances; 3. as regards the impression produced (Lisco).—*The rich doctrinal contents in the conversion of the Apostle Paul.* 1. In the fact itself: (*a*) We recognise

therein the depth of divine wisdom in the calling of men to the faith; (*b*) we see therein the greatness and omnipotence of divine mercy. 2. So also in the conduct of the apostle: (*a*) His question, "Lord, who art Thou?" with the answer to it; (*b*) his question, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" with the answer of the Lord (Lisco).—Doubts of the conversion of others founded on their early life, and on individual instances of deceitful appearances of repentance, but not justified when opposed to faith in the miraculous power of grace, and to the decided proofs of a real change of heart (Lisco).—The wholesome instruction which the conversion of Saul gives to excellent but unconverted men (Nitzsch).—*The great miracle of Paul's conversion.* 1. He who persecuted Jesus must enter His service. 2. He who did not know Christ, becomes His chosen vessel. 3. The learned Pharisee is sent to school. 4. He to whom the eye of the soul is opened, must lose his sight. 5. He who was to bear the name of the Lord into the world, must wait in solitude (Beck).—*Paul's conversion.* Saul the persecutor is suddenly converted: Paul the converted is trained in patience.—Saul's conversion a fulfilment of the word: "A man's heart determineth his ways, but the Lord bringeth it to pass" (Beck).—*Paul's sale of all that he had.* He went for joy of the treasure found in the field, and sold all that he had, and purchased that field. What he gave up for Christ: 1. Circumcision as a claim on God; for he boasted now in Christ, and had no confidence in the flesh. 2. Birth from Israel,—of the tribe of Benjamin: he was now born anew of water and of the Spirit. 3. Nationality —"an Hebrew of the Hebrews:" he was now a Christian, and therefore of the seed of Abraham and an heir of the promise. 4. His position as a Pharisee: he was now a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle. 5. His legal zeal, with which he persecuted the Church: he was now a brother and companion of the sufferings of Christ. 6. His righteousness, in which he lived blameless: he had now by grace the righteousness of faith. 7. Lastly, he sold for the cross of Christ the world, which was by Jesus Christ crucified unto him, and he unto it (Kapff).—*How difficult the Lord makes it for man to be lost.* 1. In the law, He threatens him with the curse of hell. 2. In the Gospel, He allures him with the promises of grace. 3. In the conduct of believers, He shows him the blessedness of

faith. 4. In wonderful dispensations, He manifests to him His power and goodness. 5. In the ministers of the Church, He sends to him guides to life (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*Concerning regeneration.* 1. Its necessity (vers. 1, 2): but for this it is not requisite to be a Saul breathing vengeance. 2. Its nature (vers. 3–6): it is prepared in the knowledge of our sins and of divine grace, and it is perfected in the complete change of our entire thought, feeling, and will. 3. Its consequences: at first concealed from the world (ver. 7), but gradually also showing itself in love to the Lord in His people (ver. 15), in joyfulness in suffering (ver. 16), and in zeal for the honour of God and the salvation of the world (vers. 20–22), (Lisco).—The victorious glory of Jesus Christ proved at Damascus: 1. for the protection of His friends; and 2. for the confusion of His enemies.—*The great day of Damascus:* 1. Its troubled and stormy morning. 2. Its hot and thundery noon. 3. Its quiet and blessed evening.—*The spiritual fight on the plain of Damascus.* 1. The great enemies who meet there: on the one side, Saul breathing vengeance, with his armed followers, and his weapons of human learning and carnal zeal: and on the other side, Christ, the Crucified and Exalted One, with the marks of His wounds and in His heavenly glory, behind Him crowds of angels, among whom there is joy over a sinner that repenteth. 2. The hot fight which takes place. Christ attacks: Saul defends himself. 3. The glorious victory which is there gained. Saul with his party surrenders: Christ triumphs. 4. The rich spoil which is made: "He shall have the strong for a prey." Saul led away as a prisoner, not to death, but to life. 5. The joyful *Te Deum* of the Church.—*The great life-experience of the Apostle Paul at his conversion, the foundation of his whole preaching.* 1. Of the power of sin. We are all by nature sinners, and God's enemies: the law leads only to condemnation: works cannot justify before God. All this Paul experienced on his way to Damascus, and during the three days of his blindness. 2. Of the power of grace. In Christ, the Prince of life, grace appears in the world: it is offered to all, without distinction of birth and nation: repentance and faith are the way to salvation. All this was revealed to Paul in those days, from the time that the light of Jesus shone round about him, and His voice proclaimed to him, "I am Jesus," until the time

of the imposition of hands and baptism by Ananias.—*On the Reformation-festival* (at which, according to the rules of the Wurtemberg Church service, Acts ix. 1–20 sometimes occurs as the evening lesson). Paul and Luther, two chosen instruments of the Lord. 1. How He prepared them. (*a*) He takes, for this purpose, the right materials: there a Pharisee for the destruction of Pharisaism, and here a monk for the overthrow of Popery; and yet, both times, the right man. (*b*) He lays hold of them at the right time. It was high time there before the gates of Damascus, but it was the right time. Also when the Lord awakened Luther, it may be said, When need is greatest, God is nearest. (*c*) He forges them in the right fire. The fire is the flame of repentance kindled by the Holy Ghost: the hammer is God's mighty word. In such a fire and under this hammer was Paul, as the noblest Damascus blade, forged in Damascus: and Luther was obliged to pass through the same fire, and under the same hammer, in his cloister cell at Erfurt. 2. How He used them. (*a*) To the confusion of His enemies: Paul and Luther both warriors of the Lord, cutting swords, different from a John and a Melancthon. (*b*) To the protection of His friends: the faithful pastorate of Paul; the loving zeal of Luther. (*c*) To the use of all: not by attaching ourselves to human means and swearing to human word, but by being directed to Him, whose servants and instruments Paul and Luther were.—*The history of Paul's conversion, a type of the history of the Reformation.* 1. Before both, Christ was persecuted and believers afflicted. 2. At both, (*a*) the light from heaven, and (*b*) repentance of heart. 3. From both, (*a*) evangelical preaching in the Church, and (*b*) evangelical missions in the world.

D.

Paul straightway preaches Jesus in Damascus, but is forced to flee from the city on account of the snares of the Jews.

Chap. ix. 19–25.

19 But he was certain days with the disciples at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. 21 But all who heard him were astonished, and said, Is not this he who destroyed them who invoke this name in Jerusalem, and came hither

on purpose to bring them bound to the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Messiah. 23 But after a long time, the Jews took counsel to kill him. 24 But their design was known to Paul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then his disciples took him by night, and let him through the wall, and lowered him down in a basket.

Ver. 20. Τὸν Ἰησοῦν is, on external and internal grounds, decidedly to be preferred to τὸν Χριστόν.

Ver. 24. The middle παρετηροῦντο is much better attested than the active παρετήρουν, which is inserted in G.H., perhaps because the verb is used chiefly in an active form, in the import: "to watch," "to lie in wait."

Ver. 25. Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf have adopted οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ instead of αὐτὸν οἱ μαθ., as the textus receptus, according to E.G.H. and some versions, has. Μαθ. αὐτοῦ is in A.B.C.F. and the Sinaitic MS., and in so far better attested. It is the more difficult reading, as the disciples of Saul are named, whereas hitherto only the disciples, that is, of Jesus, were mentioned: certainly no transcriber would have changed αὐτόν into αὐτοῦ; so that αὐτοῦ must be regarded as genuine.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But he was certain days with the disciples at Damascus.*—Several sections of time are to be chronologically distinguished in vers. 19–25. (*a*) Ἡμέραι τινὲς, a period of quiet residence, when Saul lived in retirement, and enjoyed strengthening and refreshing intercourse with the believers at Damascus. (*b*) The period when he stepped out of the quiet life of brotherly fellowship, and commenced preaching Jesus in the synagogues of the city. (*c*) The longer period (ἡμέραι ἱκαναί) during which Saul, with increasing strength and boldness, preached Christ to the Jews, and, so to speak, took the offensive in his teaching. (*d*) The flight of Saul from Damascus, rendered necessary by the dangerous plots of the Jews, closed this long period. (*e*) Hereupon he came to Jerusalem.—How can this, evidently very summary narrative, be chronologically combined with what we know from the Epistles of Paul himself concerning this period of his life? Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians (chap. i. 17), relates that after his conversion he did not go immediately to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before him, but at first to Arabia, and from that back to Damascus, and not until three years after to Jerusalem. If we compare the narratives, two differences between them strike us. 1. The journey to Arabia, which occurred in the interval between Saul's conversion and his

visit to Jerusalem, is in Acts ix. passed over in silence. 2. Luke only speaks of days (*ἡμέραι τινὲς*, *ἡμέραι ἱκαναί*), whilst the apostle himself reckons years, and indeed mentions precisely three years. As regards this last point, in the first place it is to be considered, that Luke after the second chapter has never given an exact date, and that, according to the words of his narrative, we might imagine that everything as yet related might possibly be compressed into a very short space of time; whereas the former chapters comprehend a period of at least four years, perhaps more: accordingly it is entirely analogous, that here also an interval of years may be comprehended in a few words. Secondly, the expression *ἡμέραι ἱκαναί* is of a nature that it may possibly comprehend several years: *ἱκανὸς* is very often, even by classical writers, used in the sense of great, important, considerable, and in connection with *χρόνος* or *ἡμέραι*, a long period. Similarly in the Hebrew, יָמִים רַבִּים for example, 1 Kings ii. 38; whereas also in ver. 39 מִקֵּץ שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים follows, of the same space of time. Accordingly, both the usage of Luke in reference to chronological statements generally, and also the expression *ἡμέραι ἱκαναί* in ver. 23, will permit us here to think of years.—But still the other difficulty remains, that Luke passes over in silence the Arabian residence of Saul. It is asked, whether in vers. 19–26 we can discover any place in which that journey, related by Saul himself, may be fitly inserted. Pearson places the Arabian journey before the *ἡμέραι τινὲς* of ver. 19; Heinrichs and Ewald, immediately after them and before ver. 20. Both notions are incompatible with the strict and literal connection of the words; especially *εὐθέως* is contradictory to them. Olshausen and Ebrard place the journey between vers. 25 and 26, which is however improbable, because Saul would hardly after his flight from Damascus return to it, which yet from Gal. i. 17 he certainly did. Therefore it only remains to insert the Arabian journey in the "long time" (ver. 23) (Neander, Meyer, and others); and indeed in such a manner, as we may suppose that Saul, soon after he had testified of Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus, went to Arabia; and not until his return from it, did he preach with such increased strength to the Jews at Damascus, that a hostile disposition was raised against him, and designs were made upon his life, in consequence of which he fled, and (soon afterwards) came to Jerusalem. Thus a reconciliation

of the two narratives may be effected, without however getting rid of the impression, that Luke knew nothing of the residence of Saul in Arabia—in short, had no full information of the events between the apostle's conversion and his visit to Jerusalem, perhaps had even no certain knowledge of the length of the interval.

2. *And straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues.*—This, as well as what follows in ver. 22, is not to be considered as the commencement of the proper apostolical work of Saul, but simply as a testimony for the Redeemer, borne from the inward feeling of his heart, which cannot but express what it believes. No trace is discoverable that he received a peculiar command and a divine mission for this purpose: on the contrary, the expression of Luke (ver. 20), *ἐκήρυσσε τὸν Ἰησοῦν*, implies that it was the same as with Philip (chap. viii. 5). It is the voluntary work of an evangelist which we see, not the mission of an apostle. The statement of Paul himself also (Gal. i. 17–23) agrees with this, where he seems to represent all that happened previous to his return to Tarsus as not properly apostolic work. The distinction between vers. 20 and 22 is here worthy of remark: in ver. 20, Saul preaches Jesus, that He is the Son of God; in ver. 22, he proves to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. These predicates, *υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ* and *Χριστός*, are not identical. It is true the idea *υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ* includes that of the Messiah, but still it is not to be restricted to it: in *υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ* the stress lies on His personal elevation, in *Χριστός* on His official dignity: in the one the chief thing is the relationship to God, in the other the Messianic work. The different form of the expression corresponds with this distinction. That Jesus is the Messiah, Saul proved (*συμβιβάζων*, *i.e.*, bringing together, showing the connection): this makes it sufficiently evident that the method which he took, was to prove from prophecy and its fulfilment, from the agreement of the Messianic prophecies with the historical facts in the life of Jesus, that He is the Messiah. On the other hand, that Jesus is the Son of God, of divine origin, a sharer of the divine glory, and worthy of divine honour, Paul proclaimed (*ἐκήρυσσε*); that is, he did not seek to prove this by inferences drawn from the Old Testament, but he exhibited it by direct and simple testimony from his own personal experience and conviction. The former method of statement confounded his opponents, inasmuch as they were not able to contradict the

proofs, and yet were unwilling to grant the conclusion. This effect was the consequence not so much of a logical superiority, but of a moral strength in which Paul had gradually increased (*μᾶλλον ἐνεδυναμοῦτο*), whilst he received confidence and boldness in his Christian conviction, testimony, and zeal in yet fuller measure.

3. *The Jews took counsel to kill him.*—At first the testimony of Saul concerning Jesus only excited astonishment and wondering inquiry, whether it were possible that the same man who was known as the greatest enemy of the Christians, and whose zeal against them had driven him even to Damascus, was now so entirely changed, and could speak in this manner and be enlisting for Christ. Afterwards the astonishment passed over into bitterness and enmity, especially when they felt themselves ashamed by being driven to a corner by his proofs from the Old Testament. As they could not oppose him with reasons, their hatred burned the more implacably against him, and they formed plans to remove him out of the way, and thus to silence him for ever.

4. *Then his disciples took him by night.*—Fortunately, Saul received information of their designs upon his life. Moreover, the Jews, in addition to their murderous plan, watched the gates of the city that he might not escape. But his disciples, that is, Jews converted by his preaching of the Gospel, assisted him in his flight by conveying him by night in a wicker basket through the wall, probably through a window broken into the city wall of a house built against it, and so let him down. What Paul himself relates (2 Cor. xi. 32) remarkably agrees with this narrative. That his life was threatened, that the gate of the city was watched, that he was put into a basket and let down through an opening in the wall, by which his flight from Damascus was rendered possible, all these four points are related in both narratives. Only they differ in the parties by whom the life of Paul was threatened, and the gates of the city were watched. According to 2 Cor. xi., this was at the instance of the ethnarch (prefect) whom the Arabian king Aretas had placed over Damascus and Syria; whilst in our passage it is ascribed to the Jews of the city. This difference, however, is not difficult to be reconciled; for without doubt the ethnarch (governor of the city) of the Arabian king, who possessed the chief authority in the

city, had no personal reason to attempt the life of Saul, and would only be induced to take measures against him by the slanderous information of the Jewish community. If this were the case, then Luke names, in fact, the real instigators of the measures adopted. But, on the other hand, it cannot be well imagined that the Jews at Damascus would be permitted personally to occupy the city gates; on the contrary, it is extremely probable that this occupation was performed by the military at the command of the government; and, accordingly, Paul names the executive authority more precisely than Luke, whilst the expression of the latter, *παρετηροῦντο*, etc., sc. *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*, agrees also with this circumstance. In this way these two narratives mutually complete each other, whilst they are evidently entirely independent. This historical fact affords no trustworthy support to the determination of the chronology of the life of the Apostle Paul, as is often imagined, because no other information whatever exists concerning this occupation of Damascus by Aretas (whose relations to Herod Agrippa and the Roman empire are known from Josephus, Ant. 18, 5), from which we are able to fix the time when that occupation took place. See Winer's Dictionary ii. 217.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The conversion of Saul was begun by a direct interposition of the exalted Redeemer in the world, and was completed by Ananias as a human instrument, although according to the direction of a peculiar revelation in a vision: in this there was already a transition into the channel of natural occurrences. But now it proceeded with the personal and spontaneous actions and works of Saul, entirely according to the usual order. It was wholly the inner impulse of his heart, the voluntary constraint to proclaim the Saviour who had so graciously pitied him to those who did not know Him, which led him to the synagogues of the city, in order there to speak of Jesus to the Jews.

2. Saul preaches Jesus to the Jews at Damascus, not only proving from the Old Testament that He is the Messiah, but also that He is the Son of God. This last is a truth which hitherto has not appeared in the history of the preaching and doctrine of the apostles. That believers invoke Jesus (*ἐπικαλούμενοι τὸ ὄνομα*) certainly supposes His divine glory and

dignity. But it is an essential step in advance, when a truth such as this regarding the person of Christ is fully and clearly recognised and expressed. And this was given to Saul to do, not without connection with the manner of his conversion and calling. From heaven, Jesus, as the Exalted One, and with divine authority and glory, appeared to him: and thus was the recognition of the divinity of Christ made evident to him, even more so than to those who were apostles before him, and had known Jesus long enough in His humiliation. The insight, penetrating more deeply into the nature of the person and work of Christ, was to be gradually acquired, even as the whole work of salvation and all the revelations of God have in them something like human growth—a development in time. The times and seasons of such increase and growth, as well as the instruments of such progress, God has reserved to His own power and wisdom to determine and choose. Saul himself, after his conversion, was only gradually led into all truth, became inwardly strong in spirit (*μᾶλλον ἐνεδυναμοῦτο*) and clear in knowledge, to which all the experiences in his life and actions, and especially his activity in preaching the Gospel, must have contributed.

For Homiletical Hints, see below.

E.

His Visit to Jerusalem, from which also he withdraws on account of the plots of the Jews.

Chap. ix. 26–30.

26 But when he came to Jerusalem, he sought to join himself to the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord on the way, and that he had conversed with Him, and how he had spoken boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he went, for a time, in and out with them at Jerusalem, and spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. 29 He spake also and disputed with the Hellenists: but they went about to kill him. 30 When the brethren learned that, they brought him down to Cæsarea and sent him to Tarsus.

Ver. 26. Neither *ὁ Σαῦλος* in some MSS., nor *ὁ Παῦλος* in one, is genuine. —*Εἰς Ἱερ.* is not so well attested as *ἐν*, which besides is the more difficult reading, as *παραγίνεσθαι* is usually constructed with *εἰς*: therefore *ἐν* has been preferred by all modern critics.—*Ἐπειρᾶτο* is equally as well attested

as the active ἐπειραζεν (Lachmann); but as it is the more unusual form, it is to be considered as genuine.

Ver. 28. Καὶ ἐκπορευόμενος is awanting in two MSS. of the first and in many of the second order: it was probably omitted on account of the preposition εἰς following, which did not appear to suit ἐκπορευόμενος; but it is to be retained, also on the authority of the Sinait. MS. Εἰς is decidedly to be preferred to ἐν, which is found only in one of the older MSS. Παῤῥησιαζόμενος, without καί preceding it, is sufficiently attested: καί might easily have been added, as of the three MSS. which have it, two omit καὶ ἐκπορ.

Ver. 29. Instead of Ἑλληνιστὰς, A. and some old Latin versions have Ελληνας. There can be no question that this is spurious. The Sinait. Codex has Ἑλληνιστὰς.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But when he came to Jerusalem.*—According to Gal. i. 18, this took place three years after the conversion of Saul. We would certainly not have imagined the interval so long, according to the narrative before us; especially the dread of Saul felt by the Christians of Jerusalem, and the recommendation and intercession of Barnabas rendered necessary on that account, make the impression as if the occurrence were pretty recent, and not already three years old. However, it is to be observed that Luke says not μὴ εἰδότες, but μὴ πιστεύοντες ὅτι ἐστὶ μαθητής: they did not believe that he was a disciple, that he was truly converted; there was wanting a true confidence in the purity of his disposition, in the genuineness of his Christianity. Perhaps suspicion was roused that his conversion to Christianity was a mere feint, a bait to catch the Christians, and the more easily to destroy them. And this idea might cleave tenaciously, precisely to the theatre of his former inquisitorial activity, so that even years after, when he made his appearance again for the first time at Jerusalem, they might be shy of him, and make it difficult for him to join himself (κολλᾶσθαι) to the Christian Church.

2. *But Barnabas took him.*—Probably Saul and Barnabas were already acquainted, which might the more easily have been the case, as both were Hellenists; and Barnabas, born in Cyprus, had many points of contact with Saul, born in the neighbouring country of Cilicia. Barnabas took him (ἐπιλαβόμενος not = taking to himself, but plainly = taking him by the hand), brought him to the apostles, and related to them what had happened at the appearance of Jesus by which Saul was converted, and what had happened during his Christian activity at Damas-

cus (πῶς—εἶδε, καὶ πῶς—ἐπαρρησιάσατο). It does not appear that Barnabas intended to inform the apostles of anything new, but rather that he related to them more authoritatively and exactly, as a trustworthy attester, a transaction which until now they knew only from remote sources.

3. *He brought him to the apostles.*—Paul himself relates (Gal. i. 18), that in this visit to Jerusalem he had intended a visit to Peter, and that besides Peter he saw no other of the apostles, but James the Lord's brother. When now Luke says ἤγαγε πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους, this does not necessarily express the whole number of the twelve; and therefore a contradiction between ver. 27 and Gal. i. 18 is maintained without reason (Zeller): however we cannot conceal from ourselves, that Luke does not appear to know the exact circumstances of the case.

4. *He spoke also with the Hellenists.*—Saul turned naturally at first to those Jews who by reason of their birth in heathen countries were, so to speak, more nearly related to him; for he himself, as a native of Tarsus, was also a Hellenist. When he spoke with them, the conference would soon be converted into a controversy, a disputation, because he bore testimony of Jesus, which they would not receive: the consequence of this was the stirring up of hatred which quickly adopted plans of assassination.

5. *They brought him down to Cæsarea.*—According to this narrative, the brethren (ἀδελφοί, so intimately now did the Christians at Jerusalem love Saul, after they had at first appeared strange and shy to him) learned that designs were made on the life of Saul, and this induced them to aid his departure. In Acts xxii. 17–21, Paul himself relates before the Jews, that Jesus appeared to him in a trance in the temple, and commanded him to depart quickly from the city, for his testimony would find no willing acceptance among them. Both accounts strikingly agree; for if the plan of assassination were formed against Saul, this was the most striking confirmation of it, that the Jews at Jerusalem would not receive his testimony. And how easily is it imaginable that Saul would not yet have resolved, in consequence of what the brethren said to him, to forsake the city, but departed directly in consequence of an intimation from the Lord in a vision.—In Gal. i. 21, Paul writes that he went from Jerusalem to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. The last place agrees exactly with our passage, for Tarsus, the capital of

Cilicia, is named as the aim of his journey. Paul himself is only the more exact, inasmuch as he names also Syria, through which the journey was taken. Accordingly, Paul did not, as might be supposed from our passage, sail direct from Cæsarea to Tarsus, but journeyed from Cæsarea, either entirely by land through Phœnicia and Syria (Meyer), or embarked at Cæsarea and landed at Tyre, Sidon, or one of the other coast towns to which the ship by chance sailed, and from that travelled by land through Syria. The last supposition is the more probable, because the Christians accompanied him to Cæsarea, which points to an intended voyage by sea; whilst for a journey all the way by land, the road through Samaria and Galilee would have been shorter. Here we lose sight of Saul, not to hear of him again until chap. xi. 25. It may be supposed, according to all antecedents, that Saul in his home would not delay to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Even here in Jerusalem Saul does not yet by any means appear as an apostle, but his only object is to be recognised as a disciple, to be received as a genuine member of the Church of Christ by the brethren at Jerusalem. Also, his testimony for Jesus, which he delivered at Jerusalem, has only the character of the experience of a simple but faithful and bold Christian, not of one commissioned and specially invested with office.

2. The conferences of Saul with the Hellenists remind us vividly of the former conferences of Stephen with the same class of men. These also had eminently the character of disputations. And it is worthy of remark, that the same man who was so hostilely disposed towards Stephen, and had pleasure in his death, now steps into his place, and prosecutes the same function which Stephen performed. Christ is a King who increases and governs His kingdom in a marvellous manner.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

And straightway he preaches Jesus, that He is the Son of God (ver. 20). Now it may be said of him, "I believe, therefore I speak." Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the essence of all evangelical preaching.

But they were all astonished (ver. 21). This astonishment

at the conversion of Saul was, 1. For the converted Saul, a wholesome mortification, as reminding him of his early perverse conduct. The converted must always make up their mind not only to be regarded with hatred and scorn by their former sinful companions, but also with doubt and distrust by their new companions in the faith. 2. But it was also an honourable testimony of the wonderful power of the Lord, who turns the hearts of men as the rivers of water, and whose gracious work neither weakness of faith can doubt nor unbelief can mock; when it even yet may be said, Though one were as a bear, he is changed into a lamb; though he were cold as ice, he is converted into a flame.

But Saul increased the more in strength (ver. 22). He who hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance. The best answer to those who doubt the sincerity of our conversion, is growth in the new life.—*He confounded the Jews.* Now he contends no more with carnal, but with spiritual weapons.—In order to refute successfully the opponents of Christianity, acuteness of intellect and learning alone do not suffice, but there must be conjoined experience of the salvation in Christ, so that we are able to say with Paul, "Jesus lives in me."—*Proving that this is the Messiah.* The Holy Ghost directed Paul to the right topics which are most needed for that and all times, namely, that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ (Apost. Past.).

But after a long time was fulfilled (ver. 23). God has appointed for every one of His servants certain times, years, places, and circumstances, in which he is to learn, experience, and do something. Well for him who correctly perceives his daily task, and faithfully spends his time. The ἡμέραι ἱκαναὶ at length pass away (Apost. Past.).—*The Jews took counsel to kill him.* Now already is fulfilled the word of the Lord, that he must suffer many things for His name's sake. Hatred and persecution belong to the signs of true conversion.

But their design was made known to Saul (ver. 24). Saul formerly had been in the wicked counsels of the Jews, to kill the disciples of Jesus. It served well, therefore, to put him to a holy shame, that God should make known to him the counsel of the Jews against his own life (Apost. Past.).—*But they watched the gates day and night.* The enemies watch day and night, in order to kill the servant of the Lord; but the true Keeper of Israel does not slumber nor sleep, and watches still better

over the life of His servant. King Aretas had placed his guard at the disposal of the enemies of Christ; but the King of heaven and earth gave command unto His angels concerning His elect, that a hair of his head should not be hurt (Leonh. and Spieg.).

Let him down in a basket (ver. 25). Saul, to whom the Lord had done such miracles, does not reject the simple means of a basket which the brethren provided for his safety. We ought not to expect anything extraordinary from God, if we can have the ordinary means (Apost. Past.).

But when he came to Jerusalem (ver. 26). According to Gal. i. 17, 18, he first went to Arabia and permitted three years to elapse before he came to Jerusalem. This was indeed a blessed and important *triennium*, in which in retirement he was prepared and rendered qualified by God for his future office. A beautiful example for *studiosos theologiæ* and *candidatos ministerii*. Would that no one entered into the ministerial office, until he had lived such a blessed *triennium præparatorium* in the school of the Holy Ghost! (Apost. Past.).—*They were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.* On the part of the Christians, an excusable suspicion. We ought not to cast ourselves into the arms of every one who gives himself out as a brother in Christ. For Paul, this was a bitter mortification and a wholesome trial, to be obliged even three years after his conversion to repent of his former conduct.—This was a hard beginning for Paul, that when he had scarcely escaped his enemies, he is not received by the disciples. But, mindful of his former life, he does not wonder that they shun him, and he bears it patiently that the brethren, in just fear, keep themselves at a distance from him. This showed the genuineness of his conversion, that he who formerly raged so cruelly, bears now patiently persecution and scorn (Calvin).—It is well, if it be found from experience that one is trusted at the end more than at the beginning (Rieger).

But Barnabas took him (ver. 27). Barnabas might well appear, with his kindly service of love to the afflicted soul of the rejected Saul, as a son of consolation (Leonh. and Spieg.).—Thus the Lord knows how to pour a drop of consolation into the bitterest cup of sorrow for His people, and particularly by the faithful love of a like-minded friend (Langbein).—*And related to them how he had seen the Lord in the way.* The

courses of life, the histories of conversion, the gracious experiences of others, often serve for our learning, edification, and humiliation. Only it must not be forgotten, that the ways of God are manifold, and that all souls are not led in the same manner.

And he was with them going in and out (ver. 28). He was now recognised as a brother, and the old enmity forgotten. It is the manner of the world, and contrary to Christian love, to remain inflexible to those sinners who have shown themselves by word and conduct to be truly converted: thereby is the work of God overlooked, and the name of Christ blasphemed.

He disputed with the Hellenists (ver. 29). Exactly as formerly Stephen did, at whose death Saul rejoiced, and who is now risen a greater in his stead. These are the wonderful ways of God in His kingdom,—His gracious dealings with souls.

When the brethren learned that, they brought him (ver. 30). This flight and rescue of the apostle, as on a former occasion from Damascus, is a testimony: 1. For Paul himself, who seems to have fled more from the persuasions of the brethren than from care about his own person. 2. For the brethren, who knew to value him, and in faithful love laboured for his rescue. 3. For the Lord, who watched over the head of His servant, and was his refuge in Jerusalem as in Damascus, in Tarsus as in Cæsarea.

On the whole section (vers. 20–30).—*The testimony of Christ.* 1. The source from which it must proceed: a heart apprehended of Christ and converted. 2. Its contents: Christ the Son of God and the Saviour of men. 3. Its success: astonishment on the one hand, and blessed fruits on the other (Langbein).—*The marks of true conversion.* 1. Joyful confession of Christ (ver. 20). 2. Willing endurance of the enmity of the world (ver. 23). 3. Humble intercourse with believers (ver. 26). 4. Godly conduct in the service of the Lord (ver. 28), (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The dangers of a newly converted person.* 1. Hatred and persecution of the world (ver. 23). 2. Distrust on the part of believers (ver. 26). 3. Spiritual pride of one's own heart. 4. Contempt of the Church and the ordinary means of grace.—*The progress of Paul's conversion* (chap. ix. 7–23). 1. The first impression: the deep feeling of his spiritual inability (ver. 8). 2. The first signs of life: "Behold, he prayeth!" (ver. 11).

3. The first testimony, that Christ is the Son of God (ver. 20). 4. The first experience: the cross for the sake of Christ (ver. 23), (Jasper).—*Evidences of faith in the newly converted Paul.* 1. Joyful confession of Christ before men (vers. 20, 22, 28). 2. Lovely growth in the new life (ver. 22). 3. Undaunted courage amid the persecutions of the world (vers. 23–25). 4. Humble patience with the distrust of the brethren (ver. 26).—*The first essay of a warrior of Christ.* He must, 1. Inviolably swear allegiance to the banner (vers. 20, 23); 2. Diligently employ his weapons (ver. 22); 3. Modestly take his place in the ranks (vers. 26, 28); 4. Courageously look the enemy in the face (vers. 22, 29); 5. Obediently retire at the signal (vers. 25, 30).—*The probation years in the ministerial office.* 1. The first official tasks. 2. The first official joys. 3. The first official sufferings.

SECTION III.

PETER, TRAVERSING THE CHURCHES OF JUDEA, IS INDUCED BY A SPECIAL REVELATION TO VISIT CORNELIUS, A GENTILE, TO PREACH CHRIST IN HIS HOUSE, AND TO BAPTISE HIM AND HIS HOUSEHOLD; A STEP AT FIRST CALLED IN QUESTION AT JERUSALEM, BUT IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE ANSWER OF PETER, FINALLY ACQUIESCED IN WITH JOY. (CHAP. IX. 31–XI. 18.)

A.

During the peaceful and flourishing period of the Churches in the Holy Land, Peter makes visits to them: on this occasion he cures the paralytic Æneas at Lydda, and raises Tabitha from the dead at Joppa.

CHAP. IX. 31–43.

31 Then had the Church in all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria peace, being edified and walking in the fear of the Lord, and was multiplied by the encouragement of the Holy Ghost. 32 But it came to pass, as Peter went through all, that he came down also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. 33 There he found a man, named Æneas, who had kept his bed for eight years, and was paralytic. 34 And Peter said to him, Æneas, Jesus the Anointed maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And immediately he arose.

35 And all the inhabitants of Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord. 36 But there was at Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Gazelle: she was full of good works and charity which she did. 37 But it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick and died. Then they washed her, and laid her in an upper chamber. 38 But as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, and desired him: Delay not to come to us. 39 But Peter arose and came with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the under and upper garments which Gazelle had made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all out, kneeled down, and prayed: then turned to the body and said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes, and sat up when she saw Peter. 41 But he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and called the saints and widows, and presented her alive. 42 And it was known in all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. 43 And it came to pass that he remained a long time at Joppa with one Simon who was a tanner.

Ver. 31. Ἡ—ἐκκλησία—ἐπληθύνετο: so read A.B.C., the Sinait. MS., many MSS. of the second order, most Oriental versions, the Vulgate, and Dionysius of Alexandria. Whereas E.G.H. and some other MSS. have the plural αἱ—ἐκκλησίαι (πᾶσαι E.) εἶχον—ἐπληθύνοντο. As these latter MSS. are, taken at an average, younger, and as the most ancient versions have the singular, so it (the singular) is decidedly best attested, and has been preferred by Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Bornemann. The plural is to be regarded as an explanation.

Ver. 38. The MSS. G.H., a number of later MSS., some versions, and fathers omit δύο ἄνδρας: yet the words συνῆλθεν αὐτοῖς (ver. 39) suppose the above words.—A.B.E.C. (first hand) and Sinait. MS. have ὀκνήσῃς and ἡμῶν; whereas G.H.C. (later hand) read ὀκνῆσαι and αὐτῶν. Particularly, the observation made in the Codex Ephræmi (C.) decides for the direct construction as the original; besides, the Coptic has along with the infinitive the first person of the pronoun, a remnant of the original reading.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Then had the Church peace.*—This section leads us to the conversion of Cornelius, forming the transition to the epoch of the missions to the Gentiles. The narrative follows Peter step by step to the neighbourhood of Cæsarea. The connection with the preceding is indicated by *οὖν*, although not in the sense that the peace of the Church is to be connected with the conversion of the former persecutor Saul, as conditioned and occasioned by it; but with *οὖν* (as Luke elsewhere uses the word, chap. viii. 4, xi. 9) the thread of the history, dropped by a digression or a longer episode, is again taken up. Ver. 31 describes the condition of the Christian Church, during a considerable period, after the persecution,

which broke out with the martyrdom of Stephen, had slackened, and was come to a complete pause, as a condition of external peace (εἰρήνη) and internal growth in Christian piety. Luke names here the three districts of Palestine,—Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, as districts where Christian churches were. In Samaria such were founded according to chap. viii. 12, 25. In Judea, as yet only the holy city itself is expressly mentioned; but it is easy to imagine that in several villages and cities of this province, as well as of the province of Galilee, which was the chief theatre of the work of Christ and the residence of most of the apostles and disciples, Christian churches had been formed. Samaria is named last, on account of the difference between the Samaritans and the Jewish people in religion. The verb ἐπληθύνετο, both according to constant usage in general, and the special usage of Luke (chap. vi. 1, 7), is to be taken in the sense of *multiplicare, augescere numero* (Bengel), not of *repleri aliqua re;* and παράκλησις cannot for this reason mean comfort, but only exhortation, encouragement.

2. *Then Peter went through all.*—This διέρχεσθαι, literally a journey through various places, was an apostolic journey of visitation and inspection. Διὰ πάντων sc. ἁγίων, as is proved from what follows. Peter came down, in this journey to the west coast, to Lydda, a village not far from the sea-coast, which Josephus describes as πόλεως τὸ μέγεθος οὐκ ἀποδέουσα (Ant. 20, 6, 2). According to ver. 38, Lydda was near to the city of Joppa.

3. Æneas is not described as a Christian: he is rather represented by εὗρε and ἄνθρωπόν τινα as a stranger: his Greek name makes his Hellenistic descent probable. The assurance given to him, confined to his bed by his paralytic limbs, "Jesus, the Anointed, makes thee whole," supposes indeed some knowledge of the name of the Redeemer from hearsay (*audierat de Christo sine dubio, sanante omnes illo tempore*—Bengel), but not by any means membership in the Church of Christ; for this kind of a description would not be employed of a believer. Ἰᾶται is to be understood strictly as present, not as future: the healing was instantaneous; the sick man can immediately rise and make his bed. This miraculous and sudden restoration of one who was so long paralytic, whom afterwards the inhabitants of the place and district saw in health, was the reason of

the conversion of many: for, that Luke does not represent all as converted, requires no proof. By *ὁ Σαρών* no particular place is meant (the modern village Saron), as some have thought, for in this case it would have wanted the article; but the well-known, fruitful, and beautiful district of that name, the flat coast-line extending from Cæsarea southward to Joppa.

4. *Tabitha;* in Greek *δορκάς*, the gazelle,—an animal which, by reason of its slender and agreeable form, its graceful motions, and its fiery and beautiful eyes, occurs among the Hebrews and other Orientals, not unfrequently, as the image of female loveliness,—was also used as a woman's name. Thus was it with this person who dwelt in Joppa (the well-known seaport of antiquity, the middle ages, and modern times), and who, entirely different from Æneas, is represented as a Christian, and in particular is praised on account of her charity and love of her neighbour, proved by many acts of benevolence. Of this a trait is mentioned, evidently taken from life, that (ver. 39) the widows come together to bewail the loss of their true benefactress, and show to Peter in the presence of the dead body the under and upper garments (*χιτῶνας καὶ ἱμάτια*) which Tabitha had made during her lifetime, evidencing not only her skilful hands, but also her self-sacrificing and ministering diligence. A noble specimen of a Christian woman is this pious disciple at Joppa, who did as much good as she could to the poorest and the most destitute, the widows; and, as it appears, not herself endowed with great means, by woman's work, which she performed with assiduity and self-denial in ministering love for the good of the needy, she proved herself to be a disciple of Him who first showed pity to her and to the world.

5. *She was sick and died.*—Without doubt Tabitha had for years ministered to Christ *in pauperibus*, and manifested her faith by her love. Now whilst Peter tarried in the neighbourhood (*ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις*), she fell sick and died. Then the disciples, after they had washed the body and put it in a quiet upper chamber, sent from Joppa to Lydda with a pressing request to Peter, whom they knew to be so near, that he would come to them without delay. It appears that the whole Christian community at Joppa shared in a feeling of grief at the loss of the disciple; and the wish was excited in their hearts which they did not venture to express in words, that, if it were possible, she might be recalled to life. A proof of the intimate fellowship

among Christians, by means of which a person who externally stood alone in the human fellowship, is joined by closer than family ties with others.

6. *But Peter arose and came.*—After the apostle had come without delay, the Christians brought him into the upper chamber where the body lay (for *οἱ μαθηταί* is without doubt the nominative to *ἀνήγαγον*). Then all the widows to whom the deceased had done good deeds stood by him; so that there were two circles collected, with whom Tabitha was connected in life. 1. The Christian church, to which she belonged. 2. The widows, partly at least not belonging to the church, whose benefactress she had been. But Peter put them all out, in order to devote himself undisturbed to prayer. Not until after earnest prayer on his knees, does he turn to the body, and call to it, "Arise." Luke vividly relates how she at first opened her eyes; then, when she saw Peter, she sat up on the bed; and then, when Peter gave her his hand, she arose from her couch. Now the apostle calls in the others, the Christians and the widows, in order to present her before them all, raised to life by the power of God,—a fact which naturally was noised abroad in the whole city, and led many to faith in Christ. Peter did not leave Joppa immediately, but made a longer residence there, dwelling with Simon, a tanner, who without doubt was a Christian: therefore the apostle could not esteem him unclean on account of his occupation, although this was the case according to rabbinical ideas.

7. The resurrection of Tabitha, as might be expected, is explained by some as a natural occurrence, and by others as an unhistorical myth. The former (*e.g.*, Heinrichs) suppose an apparent death and an awakening out of it. The latter (*e.g.*, Baur) consider the narrative simply to be a transference of events in the life of Jesus, particularly the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, made by an embellishing myth for the glorification of the apostles. Baur even lays stress on the similarity of sound between *Ταλιθά* (Mark v. 41) and *Ταβιθά*, and seeks to refer the last name to the first, as denoting the same thing. If there be any analogy in the procedure which Peter here adopted,—for example, exclusion of those present, the address to the dead, and giving her his hand,—this is the more comprehensible, as Peter was one of three disciples who, along

with the parents, were the only witnesses of the raising of Jairus' daughter; and the apostle naturally took the procedure of his Lord and Master for a model.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The unity of the Church of Christ here appears for the first time, though only in expression. There were already a great number of Christian churches in the three provinces of Palestine—Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. But yet they were considered and regarded as a whole, as ἡ ἐκκλησία: what happens to one concerns the others; there is one life in them; they are united together. It was more difficult to preserve and sustain this unity when the Gospel spread over more countries, and penetrated to the Gentile world. But even in the present time, when the national churches of one and the same confession have isolated themselves, and still more when the Romish, Greek, and Evangelical Churches appear to be separated from each other by a wide gulf, yet the *una sancta catholica ecclesia* is not a vain delusion, but a truth of faith.

2. The Church was edified.—What is edification? The believer is built by regeneration and conversion on the foundation which is laid, on Jesus Christ, the corner-stone of salvation—he is joined to Him. But as birth is only the commencement, and growth and development the progress of bodily life; so is regeneration only the commencement, and sanctification and renewal the progress of the spiritual life: continued building must follow the laying of the foundation. And as regeneration is a divine-human work in man, effected by the grace of God, but conditioned by the reception and susceptibility of man; so also edification or renewal is a divine-human work, in which human self-activity and the operation of divine grace co-operate: only here the momentum of moral strength and independent action appears predominant. Luke expresses this, inasmuch as he mentions, in the first place, walking in the fear of God, that is, earnestness in avoiding all sins of omission and commission, and in pleasing God by obedience; but afterwards mentions that they were multiplied, in consequence of the encouragement of the Holy Ghost; that is, by the gracious operation of the Spirit, they increased in the number of their members. The operation of the Spirit indeed is here referred to only as the cause of the

increase of the Church from without, but still it is also proved to be an essential power in the life of the Church.

3. The word of Peter, *ἰᾶταί σε Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός*, is a testimony of the actual presence and divine power of Jesus Christ, especially as the deed immediately follows the word. It is not the apostle who made the sick man whole and restored his paralytic strength, but Jesus Christ. This miracle is a striking proof, that Christ in a state of exaltation works and carries on what He did in a state of humiliation (see chap. i. 1, *ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν*). This word of Peter was likewise a powerful support to the faith of the sick man in the person and power of Christ. Nothing is said of the faith of the paralytic; Peter did not inquire after it; but it is undoubtedly assumed as present.

4. Conversion to the Lord, namely, to Jesus Christ, is an evidence of the divinity of Christ. Of the Gentiles who became Christians, Luke (chap. xv. 19) uses the expression *ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν Θεόν*. If faith in Jesus Christ is a conversion to the Lord, this supposes His divine dignity and essence. *Ἐπιστρέφειν* is, according to the biblical idea, such a turning of heart and will, as that sole trust is placed on Him to whom we turn, and the most devoted obedience rendered to Him: and this supposes that Christ is the same as God, otherwise conversion to His person would be nothing else than falling into idolatry.

5. Tabitha was full of good works and charity. Here we find the observation of Baumgarten founded: it lies in this expression, that the good works and alms-deeds, by which this Christian woman was distinguished, are represented as something residing in her, something adhering to her soul; whilst good works, as soon as they have been performed, acquire an external substantiality. But herein consist the genuineness and Christianity of good works, that the whole soul of the man is contained in them; so that not only the hand gives something and does something, but the soul itself, and what is done proceeds from the heart. If this is the case, then the work is not an *opus operatum*, which is foreign to the soul, and completely so to the Spirit of God; but something cleaving to the soul, the practice of which adheres to the soul, remains in it, and follows it even in death (Rev. xiv. 13).

6. The resurrection of Tabitha was, as little as the cure of

Æneas, an independent act of Peter as a Christian and an apostle, but the act of Christ, for it was essentially an answer to prayer. The apostle kneels when he is alone with his God and Lord in the chamber of the dead; and not until then does he turn to the body, and call on it, in the power of the Lord whom he has invoked—of that Saviour who is ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς—to arise. This prayer is the essential feature by which the resurrection of Tabitha is distinguished from that of the daughter of Jairus. Jesus, without any preceding prayer, took the dead child by the hand and recalled her to life; but Peter does not do so until he had prayed to the Lord for this miracle. The name of Jesus, and not that of His apostle, is thereby glorified: many are converted in consequence at Joppa to Christ, and not to Peter.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Then had the Church peace (ver. 31). After the storm there always comes a little hour of rest for the Church: however much the dragon may snort, the Lord spreads His wings over His brood and screens them (Apost. Past.).—*Through all Judea and Samaria.* Under the banner of the cross, Jews and Samaritans are found together in peace. Behold here the reconciling power of the Gospel, the destination of Christianity to be the religion of the world!—*Being edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, was multiplied by the encouragement of the Holy Ghost.* The season of refreshing for the Church of Christ: 1. As times of rest and comfort after the storms of tribulation. 2. As times of gathering and strengthening for new fights.—*How are years of peace in the Church converted into years of blessing?* 1. When peace does not make us presumptuous, and the Lord is feared, although there is no enemy to fear. 2. When peace does not make us luxurious, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost is sought, although we are prosperous. 3. When peace does not make us indolent and the Church is edified, that is, increases in all the parts of Christian life, instead of resting self-satisfied on the laurels of former days.—In peace it concerns us to build: houses and fields, schools and churches, hearts and congregations.—Concerning healthy and unhealthy peace: 1. in the house; 2. in the country; 3. in the Church.—*How is a church edified?* 1. When the fear of God and His word is the

immoveable foundation on which its life and doctrine rest. 2. When love and peace in Jesus Christ is the cement which binds hearts together. 3. When the power of the Holy Ghost is the impelling cause which guides individuals and the whole Church toward heavenly perfection.—*When does a church flourish?* 1. When it is rooted in the fear of the Lord. 2. When it branches out in brotherly love. 3. When it ripens the fruits of the Spirit.—Wherefore are times of blossoming so brief in Christian hearts, Christian congregations, and Christian nations?—Is it spring or autumn in the Church of the Lord?

But it came to pass as Peter went through all (ver. 32). Church-visitation is as necessary to a congregation, as the inspection of a gardener is to a garden. We must not be sure even when the Church is in peace, but take diligent oversight, for the devil is not idle (Starke).—*That he came down to the saints.* It is a great deterioration that this name, "a saint," has become in Christendom a mock-name, that it is esteemed self-glorification when one assumes it. According to Scripture, it may be employed in all humility. A sinner, who repents and dedicates himself to the service of God and Christ, is a saint (Rieger).

There he found a man who had kept his bed eight years (ver. 33). Among the saints we meet with the sick: the community of the saints in all respects retains something of a hospital, so that one must be a nurse to another. How much living strength has already proceeded from Jesus Christ! Everything which is sickly in me, will through Him hereafter be presented gloriously (Rieger).

Jesus, the Anointed, maketh thee whole (ver. 34). A word, 1. Of apostolic humility: Jesus Christ does it, not I; 2. Of the prophetic power of faith: He makes, not He may make, thee whole.—*Arise and make thy bed.* When such as we, in these degenerate days, pray for help beside a sick-bed, if it be God's will, we exhort the sick to patience, and comfort them with regard to the future: then a Peter may, in his apostolic fulness of power, proclaim to Æneas, Thou wilt be made whole, yea, thou art already made whole; then a Luther, in the heroic power of his faith, may command the sick and faint-hearted Melanchthon, Thou must live, thou shalt not die.—Two things pertain to the care of sick souls. 1. They must be taught by faith to look to the Lord, from whom only come salvation and help.

2. They must be exhorted in His strength to rise up and walk in newness of life.

They turned to the Lord (ver. 35). If the Lord blesses the ministry of His servants, the cure of the body must lead to the salvation of the soul; and one recovered draws many after him.

A disciple (ver. 36). Women should not be teachers, but disciples in the Church (Starke).—*Full of good works and alms.* Almsgiving does not impoverish: it empties the hand, but fills the heart (Prov. xix. 17).—*The beautiful eulogium on Tabitha.* 1. She was a disciple: this indicates faith which like Mary sits at the feet of Jesus. 2. She was full of good works and alms: this indicates love which serves the Lord in His brethren, and by which faith manifests itself as living.

It came to pass that she fell sick and died (ver. 37). Not until she died was it made evident what a great treasure the Church had in her. The odour of the costly ointment filled the house, when the vessel was broken in which it was concealed (Besser).—Few words are used of her sickness and death. But certainly the Lord was at her sick-couch and death-bed, as formerly He had not failed in her closet, where as a disciple she kneeled in prayer, and in her work-shop, where she sewed garments for the poor. As thou livest, so thou diest.

When the disciples heard that Peter was at Lydda, they sent for him (ver. 38). They also were believers, but they had not the miraculous gifts of a Peter. Grace and gifts are two things. God imparts the latter according to His wisdom, and gives to one servant five pounds, to another three, and to a third one (Apost. Past.).—They scarcely hoped for a miracle from Peter; they desired chiefly his consolation. Much is already gained when, in a house of mourning, there is only earnest desire after comfort from the word of God.

They showed the upper and under garments (ver. 39). Good deeds left behind are the best relics of the saints (Starke).—The tears of the widows at the bier of Tabitha, a beautiful testimony: 1. To the dead and her love; 2. To the living and their gratitude.

But Peter put them all out, and kneeled down and prayed (ver. 40). Wherefore does he put out those present? 1. After the example of his Master at the raising of Jairus' daughter. 2. He may have perceived in some an idle curiosity. 3. In

order to be able to pray better alone. 4. Because he did not yet know whether it was the Lord's will to restore life to the dead: therefore he desires to speak alone with the Lord, and to present to Him the wish of the disciples.—Observe: (*a*) A teacher, although he should possess miraculous apostolic powers, must yet remain in constant dependence upon the Lord; he must never in his ministry act or think presumptuously, as if he could do something. (*b*) We must not enter upon every matter, which even pious persons request of us, without examination, but must first inquire at the Lord, especially when it concerns the life or death of a child of God, the remaining or going of a teacher, etc. (*c*) Private prayer is especially necessary on such occasions.—*Tabitha, arise.* Thus should it succeed with teachers in the spiritual awakening of souls: in prayer, to have strength and freedom before God; with the word of God, to press upon dead hearts; by assistance, to direct and guide those raised to life, and of dead souls to present living saints, to the praise of God and the example of others. That is a work worthy of an apostle and follower of Jesus (Apost. Past.).

He called the saints (ver. 41). There is something extremely beautiful when a teacher can publicly distribute those blessings which he asked on his knees in the closet, and can strew them as seeds of more abundant fruits (Apost. Past.).—Luke has related the weeping of the widows for the dead: he has not described their joy at her being again raised: that was indescribable (Besser).

And it was known in all Joppa (ver. 42). Simon, the son of Jonas, comes to more honour in Joppa than Jonas, the old prophet (Starke).—*Many believed.* In Lydda all turned; in Joppa, only many. All miracles have not the same effect, and all sermons have not the same blessing (Apost. Past.).

And it came to pass that he remained a long time in Joppa (ver. 43). If God opens anywhere to a teacher a wide door, he is bound to remain there as long as he can, in order that the good may take root.—*With one Simon, a tanner.* No trade is so insignificant in the eyes of the world, even externally so dirty, which may not be rendered holy (Starke).—Although the house of Simon the tanner was insignificant before man, yet, according to chap. x. 6, it was known and described by the angels of God in heaven (Rieger).

On the whole section.—The Church of Christ is rich in love and by love. 1. Some such souls will always be found in a congregation, who, as it were, serve as centres and gathering-places for the love present in the congregation, through whose hands every work of love proceeds, who are ever loud and yet silent admonishers for the others. Where there is even only one Tabitha in a congregation, it is rich by love—in such a soul, the Church has its greatest capital; and where such a one dies, there the Lord will raise up successors—love dies not. 2. But the Church is only then rich in love and by love, when the communicating love meets with a grateful reception: otherwise there is no blessing in all the gifts received (Palmer).—How good works and alms-deeds are necessary features in the portrait of a true Christian (Beck).—How the Lord has always men ready to call the dead in His Church to life.—On the participation of women in the home mission: 1. Their duty; 2. their fitness; 3. their opportunities (Fritz).—Christian sympathy in our neighbours' pains and sorrows (Hartmann).—How the miracles of Jesus and His apostles ought to be blessed to us: they ought, 1. to strengthen our faith; and 2. to excite us to holiness (Lisco).—*Tabitha no picture of fashion, but of example for Christian women.* 1. In her life: by her walk of faith (she was a disciple) and labour of love (she was full of good works and alms-deeds). 2. In her death: by the tears of love (the widows) and the prayer of faith (Peter) at her bier. 3. In her recall to life: as an image of the blessed duration of a sanctified life—below in blessed memory, and above in heavenly glory.—*The dead upper room of Tabitha, and the dead-chamber of our loved ones.* 1. As dark abodes of mourning love, weeping with good reason. 2. As quiet chapels of praying faith, wrestling with God. 3. As glorious fields of victorious hope, triumphing over death and the grave.—*The dead Tabitha, a life-portrait for the encouragement of many.* 1. The course of her life, which is read on her coffin, short, but expressing much: "A disciple," "full of good works." 2. The mourners who stood around her bier, simple yet touching; weeping love and comforting faith. 3. The funeral hymn which was uttered beside her dead body, a triumphal call to life, Tabitha, arise! unique in its nature, yet full of comfort to all; for it pointed not only to a short continuance of her

earthly course, but to an eternal resurrection and continuance in life of all the children of God, above in the Father's house, and below in those who were by them directed to God.—*On the home mission. Tabitha, arise! a call for our time.* 1. To whom is it addressed? Arise, spirit of love and compassion! This call is addressed to all modern, but especially to evangelical Christianity. And if men will not hear it, then shame them, ye women, who from the days of Tabitha have always been foremost in the works of love and in the heroic deeds of Christian charity. 2. Wherefore is it addressed? Great is the need of the time, and greatly has the obligation of rescuing love increased, especially in the Evangelical Church, which in this has to learn from her Catholic sister. 3. Whence does it come? Not from without. The work of the home mission is no mere matter of fashion: the arm of the world can be of no use in it: the Lord Himself must be present, Peter must come: God's word with its strength, the Church with its blessing, the spiritual office with its love.—*The miraculous resurrection of Tabitha, a type of the gracious miracle of spiritual resurrection.* There precedes: 1. Sorrow and sympathy of a mourning church: the weeping widows. 2. Prayer and supplication of God's believing servants: the praying Peter. 3. The awakening call of the divine word: Tabitha, arise. There follows: 4. The first signs of life in an awakened soul: she opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up. There is further necessary: 5. Friendly assistance for the life yet weak: he gave her his hand, and lifted her up. 6. Loving reception into the Church: he called the saints and widows, and presented her alive. Lastly, there fails not: 7. A blessed impression upon many.—Compare with the life of Tabitha, the biography of the pious Beata Sturm, 1730, called (*per anagramma*) the Wurtemberg Tabitha.[1]

[1] Tabea, in German.

B.

From Joppa, Peter is sent to the Roman centurion Cornelius, in consequence of divine revelations to both, to whom he proclaims Christ; and as forthwith the gift of the Holy Ghost was imparted to him and the other Gentile hearers, he orders baptism to be conferred. (Chap. x. 1–48.)

I. The God-fearing Roman centurion Cornelius, at Cæsarea, is induced, by the appearance of an angel, to send to Joppa for Peter.

Chap. x. 1–8.

1 But a man in Cæsarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the so-called Italian band, 2 Pious and God-fearing, with all his house, who gave much alms to the people (Israel), and prayed to God always, 3 Saw evidently in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him; who said, Cornelius! 4 But he looked on him, and was afraid, and said, What is it, lord? But he said to him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, surnamed Peter. 6 He is a guest with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side. 7 But when the angel who spake with him was departed, he called two of his servants, and a God-fearing soldier of them that waited on him continually, 8 And related all things to them, and sent them to Joppa.

Ver. 1. Ἦν after τις is awanting in all the principal Codd., and was only added because it was overlooked, that the construction is carried on to εἶδεν, ver. 3.

Ver. 3. Ὡσεὶ περί is indeed in A.B.C.E., and is preferred by Lachmann: ὡσεί by itself is attested by G., Chrysostom, and Œcumenius; περί is unnecessary, and is probably an insertion.

Ver. 5. Τινα after Σίμωνα is better attested than its omission: it is in A.B.C. and many versions; but it appeared to be derogatory to the universally known apostle.

Ver. 6. The conclusion of ver. 6, in the textus receptus, οὗτος λαλήσει σοι, τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν, is undoubtedly spurious: it is awanting in all the Codd. of the first rank and ancient versions, and is an interpolation from ver. 32 and chap. ix. 6.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *A man in Cæsarea, called Cornelius.*—Cæsarea in Palestine, situated on the Mediterranean Sea, provided with an excellent harbour which was in high repute, was built by Herod the Great, and inhabited mostly by Gentiles, yet also by a few thousand

Jews. It was afterwards chosen by the Roman procurators as their residence, for which reason Tacitus (Hist. 2, 79) calls it *Judææ caput*. Cornelius was a centurion of the Italian cohort, which had its name, no doubt, in distinction from those cohorts who were raised in Palestine and Syria and embodied in the Roman army: it was composed of native Romans, at least Italians, and formed the nucleus of the garrison. Probably the procurator had already taken up his residence in Cæsarea, as the Roman garrison lay there. Cornelius was without doubt an Italian by descent. With regard to his character, Luke describes him as pious (εὐσεβής, the most general term, which may be asserted even of purely Gentile piety), and fearing God with all his house (φοβούμενος τὸν Θεόν, referring to the one true God). This disposition manifested itself, partly in diligent prayer and supplication to God, and partly in the exercise of practical liberality toward the Israelites (ὁ λαός, the people Israel); like that other centurion in Capernaum who loved the people Israel, and of his own private means built for them a synagogue (Luke vii. 5). This liberality is a beautiful and touching trait, not only in a hardened soldier, but more especially as practised by a Roman toward the Jews, subject to Rome, and in general despised. The whole description leads us to suppose that Cornelius, dissatisfied with his ancestral Gentile religion, as many of his age were, had turned inquiringly to the faith of Israel, and to the knowledge and worship of the one true God. It is no wonder that he was held in general estimation among the Jews (ver. 22). However, there is no reason from this description to suppose that he was a proselyte in the proper sense of the term, as is generally thought (Grotius, Neander, and others); in the whole narrative (see ver. 28 and chap. xi. 1) he is regarded as really and socially a Gentile. He had only in a loose way, according to his mode of thinking and family worship, inclined to Judaism, but had not by any decided act attached himself externally to it.

2. *He saw in a vision an angel of God.*—The appearance of the angel was imparted to Cornelius about the ninth hour (three in the afternoon), the third hour of prayer, which probably the pious Gentile observed of his own accord. He saw in a vision—that is, in an internal vision produced by God, but distinctly (φανερῶς), not by a deception of the senses—an angel of God coming into his room, who addressed him by name. Cornelius

looks up, contemplates attentively the form, is terrified at the unexpected and dazzling appearance, and replies with a respectful question. The angel informs him that his prayers and alms did not remain unforgotten by God (*ἀνέβησαν εἰς μνημόσυνον—γενησόμεναι μνημόσυνον*): they have ascended up as incense to heaven, so that they remind God of thee. And now Cornelius receives a command, in order to be led to salvation by Peter, to send to Joppa for him. *Σίμωνά τινα*, because the apostle was yet unknown to the Roman. Also the house of the man with with whom he lived as a guest (*ξενίζεται*, *hospitatur*) is accurately indicated.

3. Cornelius obeys the intimation received, and without delay calls two of his servants (*οἰκέτης*, a much more honourable name than *δοῦλος*), who as belonging to his *οἶκος* were God-fearing, and a pious soldier (*εὐσεβής*, see above) of them who were attached to his personal service. He communicated to them without reserve (*ἅπαντα*) the vision which he had seen, and sent them with the necessary instructions to Joppa.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. How everything in this history of the conversion of the first Gentile convert was to be purely the result of the divine guidance, is evident from this among other things, that Cornelius did not come in contact with Philip the evangelist, who must have been much nearer, as he (chap. viii. 40 compared with chap. xxi. 8) without doubt dwelt at that time in Cæsarea, but was directed to Peter, who was not then on the spot. It was not to be a simple member of the Church, or an evangelist like Philip, by whom the first Gentile was baptized and received into the Church, but one of the twelve themselves, and indeed that one who was pre-eminent among them in word and action.

2. The angel who appeared to Cornelius was not himself to convert him, but was only a heavenly messenger to bring the divine command to send for Peter. It was Peter who first preached the Gospel to him, and received him into the Church of Christ. It is the counsel of God, and the way which He has ordained, that repentance and remission of sins be preached to all nations in the name of Jesus; and that thus the word of the Gospel, and indeed the word attested by men, was to be the means of salvation. Never was the mission of an angel the

direct instrument of the conversion of a soul, and never ought a man to make his faith dependent upon such an extraordinary appearance from the higher world.

3. A high value is attributed to the prayers and alms of Cornelius, not only in the character given him by the historian, but also in the message of the angel. Luke places the alms first (ver. 2), the angel the prayers (ver. 4), because God chiefly regards the heart. Even the revelation of God in the message of the angel, which will lead to the eternal salvation of this Roman, is connected with these pious works. Does this imply the meritoriousness of works, *meritum ex congruo*, according to the Romish notion? By no means, and this because these works (*a*) have no merit in themselves, as external works, but by reason of the piety which was their source; (*b*) because also the fear of God, from which the good works of Cornelius toward the people of God as well as his diligent prayers proceeded, was on the basis of the Old Testament entirely dependent on the grace and revelation of God coming to meet him and seeking him afar off. What was pleasing to God in him was his susceptibility toward the truth, and his fidelity toward that knowledge which was already bestowed on him. And whosoever is faithful in that which is little will be entrusted with that which is great. Cornelius proved this fidelity and his careful practice of obedience in immediately following the intimation imparted to him.

For the Homiletical Hints, see below.

II. Before the messengers come to Peter, God enjoins him, in a symbolical manner, in a trance, to esteem nothing unclean which He has cleansed. Immediately thereupon, those sent by Cornelius with his invitation arrive.

Chap. x. 9–23.

9 But on the next day, as these went on their journey, and drew nigh to the city, Peter went up to the house-top to pray about the sixth hour. 10 And he became hungry, and would have eaten; but while they made ready something for him, a trance happened to him. 11 And he saw heaven opened, and a vessel descending as a great linen cloth, united at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all four-footed and creeping beasts of the earth and birds of heaven. 13 And there came a voice to him, Arise, Peter, kill and eat. 14 But Peter said, Never, O Lord; for I have never eaten anything common and unclean. 15 And a voice

spake to him again the second time, What God has cleansed, that make not thou common. 16 This happened thrice: and immediately the vessel was taken up to heaven. 17 But while Peter doubted in himself what this vision was that he had seen, behold, the men sent by Cornelius, after they had made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the door, 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, surnamed Peter, was a guest here. 19 But while Peter was occupied in thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, men seek thee: 20 Arise therefore, get thee down, and go with them, for I have sent them. 21 Then Peter went down, and said to the men, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the reason wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just and God-fearing man, who also is in good report among all the nation of the Jews, has received a divine command by a holy angel to send for thee to his house, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in and lodged them.

Ver. 9. Ἐκείνων, in B.C., Vulgate, and some fathers, is to be preferred to αὐτῶν, which appeared to correspond better with the persons mentioned directly before.

Ver. 10. Here, on the contrary, αὐτῶν is far better attested than ἐκείνων. —Ἐγένετο in A.B.C., recommended by Griesbach, received by Lachmann and Tischendorf, was corrected into ἐπέπεσεν, which appeared to suit better both ἔκστασις and the prep. ἐπί, as well as the idea of a supernatural power.

Ver. 11. Ἐπ' αὐτόν after καταβαῖνον is found only in G., and is awanting in the principal MSS. and versions: it is without doubt spurious.—The words δεδεμένον καὶ are awanting in some documents, therefore Lachmann and formerly also Tischendorf erased them; but probably they have been omitted to correspond with chap. xi. 5, and are here genuine, whilst in chap. xi. 5 no variations occur.

Ver. 12. The position of τῆς γῆς after ἑρπετά is completely attested.

Ver. 14. Καί instead of ἤ has A.B., a number of versions, and fathers for it, and therefore is preferred by Lachmann and Tischendorf.

Ver. 16. Εὐθύς instead of πάλιν is completely attested: it would not have been inserted instead of the more evident word πάλιν, whilst the reverse might easily have occurred.

Ver. 17. Bornemann has inserted ἐγένετο after ἑαυτῷ in the text, whereas only D. has it, and it is wholly superfluous.—Lachmann omits καί before ἰδού on the authority of A.B., some cursive MSS., and versions; but if it stood there, it might have appeared unnecessary.

Ver. 19. The compound διενθυμουμένου is to be preferred to the simple ἐνθυμ.—Τρεῖς (chap. xi. 11) has indeed some important Codd. for it, but still it is a later addition. B. has δύο.

Ver. 20. Ὅτι is to be preferred to διότι, which has only G. for it.

Ver. 21. The words τοὺς ἀπεσταλμένους ἀπὸ τοῦ Κορνηλίου πρὸς αὐτόν after τοὺς ἄνδρας are in H., some cursive MSS. and fathers, yet with various differences. It is decidedly a later addition.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *On the next day.*—Cæsarea, according to Edrisi (Winer's

Dictionary), was thirty Roman miles distant from Joppa, that is, about six geographical (German) miles; thus a distance which amounted to a good day's journey. The messengers of Cornelius, to whom the angel appeared about three in the afternoon, went away, as we gather from ver. 7, immediately after, or at all events that evening; and the next day about the sixth hour, that is, at noon, when Peter went up to the house-top and received the vision, they were near to the city Joppa. On their return also, when Peter accompanied them, they spent more than one day on the journey.

2. *Peter went up to the house-top to pray.*—Luther has translated δῶμα, an upper chamber, and so also other expositors have considered it as the same with ὑπερῷον; but if Luke had meant that, he would have used the word as he has done in other places. Δῶμα itself means the house, or a part of it; certainly never by itself alone, the house-top; but ἐπὶ τὸ δῶμα indicates that the house-top is meant. Besides, the vision, in which Peter sees heaven opened and something let down from it, supposes that he was in the open air, and thus was upon the flat roof of the dwelling-house, to which it was often customary to repair for private religious exercises. At this time the apostle went up to perform his devotions, for the sixth hour was one of the three hours of daily prayer. As it was at this time of the day, so it is natural that Peter experienced hunger; but whilst the household (αὐτῶν), the family or domestics of Simon the tanner, prepared something to eat, the trance (ἔκστασις) took place.

3. *A trance happened to him.*—In the trance, transporting him suddenly and with irresistible power, Peter sees, hears, and answers in a condition, in which ordinary consciousness and the perception of the surrounding external world are taken away, and his soul is susceptible only to the vision imparted to him by God. He sees heaven opened, and a vessel as a great linen cloth descending, which was united at the four corners, and thus let down; so that we must imagine that it was held from above by the four corners, and then was so let down that Peter in the ecstatic condition of his soul could look into it and observe all that was in it,—namely, all four-footed and creeping beasts of the earth and birds of heaven. Πάντα is not to be understood, according to Kuinoel = *varii generis*, which πάντες with the article never means, but precisely = all beasts;

to which the objection that this is not possible, is of no importance, for it is spoken of a vision, not of an objective appearance: *prospectum hunc humano modo non debemus metiri, quia ecstasis Petro alios oculos dabat* (Calvin). All beasts are meant, with the exception of fish, which could not well be represented in a dry cloth. It is wholly arbitrary and contradictory to the universal term *πάντα* with the article, to suppose that only levitically unclean animals (Kuinoel) were placed before Peter.

4. *Arise, kill and eat.*—*Ἀναστάς* does not imply that Peter lay during the trance, perhaps on his knees continuing in a praying attitude; but it only contains an exhortation to action. The command to kill (here *θύω*, not to sacrifice) and eat, conjoined with his present hunger, implies an invitation to take without any distinction between Levitically clean and unclean animals. But this Peter refuses to do in a decided manner, appealing to his strict observance of the precepts of the law in this matter. The address *κύριε* is respectful, but as little supposes that it is Christ who speaks with him, as does the question of Saul, *τίς εἶ, κύριε* (chap. ix. 5). When the voice is heard the second time, it says, What God has cleansed (made clean, declared to be clean), that make not thou (in contrast to the great God) common (declare not, treat not as unclean or profane). After the offer was made thrice (*ἐπὶ τρίς*, until the third time), the vessel was immediately taken up to heaven. The aorist *ἀνελήφθη*, as well as *εὐθύς*, gives us to understand that the taking up took place quickly, whilst the letting down occurred slowly and perceptibly.

5. *While Peter doubted in himself.*—What the vision meant, was not immediately clear to the apostle: he was in doubt about it (*διηπόρει*), and thought earnestly for a good while upon it. But the solution of the mystery was in fact given by the call, at the same instant addressed to him, to come to the Gentile Cornelius. What was to be revealed to him referred not merely directly to food and to eating without scruple what the Gentiles would prepare for him, but to the Gentiles themselves, who were cleansed by God, and therefore were not to be reckoned by him as common and unclean, or avoided as unholy. The beasts which were shown him were symbols of human persons, of mankind collectively, inasmuch as all beasts of the earth were placed before his eyes. Accordingly, the distinction between clean and

unclean among men (according to the Levitical law), that is, between Jews and Gentiles, was to cease by God's own purifying interposition. By ἐν ἑαυτῷ placed before διηπόρει we are given to understand that Peter was no longer in a state of trance, but had come to himself, that is, was restored to the condition of ordinary consciousness and self-recollection.

6. *Behold, men seek thee.*—Whilst the messengers of Cornelius already stood before the door of the house and inquired after Peter, he was sunk in deep meditation on the import of the vision. Then the Spirit of Christ internally revealed to him, without his having heard the call of the strangers, that men sought him, and ordered him to go down and unhesitatingly to journey with them, for they were sent by the Lord Himself. When it is supposed that Peter may have heard from the house-top the men calling to him, and when this is further amplified (as by Neander), violence is done to the narrative, which explains the affair as a supernatural, and not merely as a natural transaction. Peter went down, and (as in general two stairs lead to the house-top, one inside the house and the other directly from the street) probably by the outside stair, and presented himself before them with the inquiry, wherefore they had come.

7. *But they said.*—In their answer, the character which the messengers of Cornelius give of their master is deserving of notice: in their mouth it is very appropriate. Instead of εὐσεβής (ver. 2), δίκαιος here stands; a quality concerning which the subordinates of a man would have most experience. They lay also stress on the good reputation in which the centurion stood with the Jews; and this is extremely appropriate both for the speakers, who indeed were Gentiles, but had a leaning toward the Jews, and for Peter, to whom they wished thereby to recommend their master. The expression χρηματίζομαι, which among the heathen was used of oracles and other sayings of the gods, is also strikingly appropriate, without sounding exactly profane from the standpoint of revelation. And the explicit declaration to μεταπέμψασθαι, which indirectly excuses Cornelius troubling Peter, but requires him to inquire after him, is here entirely in place. Peter is himself a guest in this house, yet he brings into it guests, who are lodged there. That he does not hesitate to invite them before he goes with them, is already a result of the revelation imparted to him.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

The revelation imparted to Peter in an ecstatic state refers to the mission to the Gentiles. It was not the ethical abolition of the Levitical laws of purification for the Jewish Christians in itself which was to be made known: the entire historical connection in which this narrative stands, decides against this notion. Its chief object was to remove all scruples, on the ground of the divine determination, which hindered Peter from lending his direct assistance to preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles; and, indeed, once for all. The revelation had not its exclusive design in the conversion of Cornelius, but there was a principle established by it. On account of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the express commands and promises of Jesus Christ, it could never have been doubtful to the apostles that the Gentiles should be converted and incorporated into the kingdom of Christ; as even Peter himself in his discourses (chap. ii. 39, iii. 25) has made references to the conversion of the Gentiles. But that the Gentiles should be directly received into the Church of Christ, of this the apostles had, as it appears, no conception; on the contrary, they supposed that they would only become Christians on condition of going over to the people of Israel, so that they would be incorporated by circumcision with the people of God, and thereby must submit to the Levitical law and the whole Mosaic dispensation. It was precisely this prejudice which required contradiction, and this was done by means of a divine revelation. The vision had no other chief contents than this: "What God has cleansed, that make not thou common." The multitude of beasts which Peter saw in vision were let down from heaven, and from heaven nothing can come down but what is pure and good. This was an image of those Gentiles whom God Himself cleansed by the operation of His grace, and put into an acceptable condition. The vision refers in the first instance to the Gentiles: this is evident, partly from the expression of Peter (ver. 28); partly from the conclusion of this chapter, where we are informed that the Spirit of God was poured upon the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, and only after this divine act had preceded, are they baptized; partly from the argument of Peter (chap. xi. 15–17); partly from the later recollection of the same apostle of this fact (chap. xv. 8, 9), where he

appeals to this, that God has borne witness for these Gentiles by the communication of the Holy Ghost, without making any distinction between them and the Jews, purifying their hearts by faith.—But likewise the vision has also a reference to the Levitical laws of food and purification; yet only in so far as the conscientious scruples of the pious Jewish Christians to intercourse with the pious Gentiles, and to partaking of their food, were to be removed. The evident meaning of this divine intimation was merely that because their persons were cleansed by God, their food was not to be avoided as unclean; not that for Israel itself, even for converted Israel, were the Mosaic laws of food in general to be abolished. Only where God Himself, the Holy One, has interposed in a purifying manner, and declared something to be well-pleasing to Himself, man is not to act as if it were still unclean and profane, which we must avoid and withdraw from for the sake of God.

2. The Spirit gives to the apostle the interpretation of this mysterious vision in application to the messengers of Cornelius, who had at that moment arrived. The Spirit speaks to Peter, as formerly to Philip (chap. viii. 29), in the way of suggestion. But when the Spirit says, "I have sent these men," He speaks not in His own name, but in the name of God, who, by His angel, commanded Cornelius to send messengers to Joppa.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

But a man in Cæsarea (ver. 1). Hitherto the history treated of the founding of the Church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, which was effected, at first under the fiery baptism of the Holy Ghost, and then under the bloody baptism of martyrdom. This Church had now a period of peace. Now the second part of the great work of the Church, the conversion of the Gentiles, was to commence (Rieger).—Peter, who at Pentecost preached the word of reconciliation to Israel, is appointed by the Lord to proclaim the salvation of Christ to the first-fruits of the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*A centurion.* The common saying, *nulla fides pietasque viris, qui castra sequuntur*, does not universally apply. The condition of a soldier and the fear of God are not antagonistic; for the military state is not against the laws of Christ: it secures internal peace and protects against external force. But how unlike are most

modern soldiers to the centurion Cornelius! He was devout and God-fearing; they are often godless and unbelieving. He gave alms; they are often seen to rob and plunder. He prayed to God always; they are heard to curse, so that heaven and earth might well tremble (Starke).—Roman from head to foot, Cornelius had yet no heart for the Roman gods; he was one of the sons of Japhet who are conquered in the conquered tents of Shem by the God of Shem (Besser).—A Gentile, a Roman, a soldier, a centurion: all barriers, one would think, to divine grace; but it goes through them all.

Pious and God-fearing, with all his house (ver. 2). It is the highest ornament of a house when both the master and the dependants acknowledge and fear God; to which the former should diligently command the latter, Gen. xviii. 19 (Starke).—*Gave alms and prayed to God always.* Perhaps something of the service of works may have adhered to this; but, at all events, it was the honest striving of a man entirely to forsake unrighteousness, to serve God actively according to the measure of his knowledge (alms), and to make progress in the attainment of salvation (prayer). It would be doing injustice to reject entirely the actions of such persons, and to place them in the same class with base pharisaical spirits. We have, indeed, to warn them that they do not rest in ceasing to do evil and in learning to do well, because God forgives sin and bestows salvation only by grace; but we must also beware that we do not reject the right use of the law as a schoolmaster to bring to Christ, and as a rule of life to believers (Apost. Past.).

An angel, about the ninth hour (ver. 3). This was the hour of evening prayer. The hours of prayer are the true hours of grace, when the angels of God delight to come.

Thy prayers and thine alms are come up (ver. 4). Nothing ascends to God as a pleasing savour except what has come from Him, has been effected by Him, and has been done for His sake, Phil. ii. 13 (Quesnel).—The acceptable sacrifice of the new covenant: 1. The prayer of faith. 2. The alms of love.

Send men to Joppa and call Simon Peter (ver. 5). Not angels, but the ordinary ministers of the word, are the instruments by which we are brought to regeneration and faith. The good angels despise not God's ordinance and ministers; they do not turn people away from them, but direct people to them: who-

ever turns people away from them is not a good angel and messenger (Starke).—That Cornelius is commanded to send for Peter, and that thus Peter must go to him, indicates the more evidently that Cornelius is not converted to Judaism, but that the kingdom of God is turned to the Gentiles (Rieger).—Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, that he may have abundance. This is the very thing which we must wish, in these days, for many an honourable house, where there is indeed religion, but yet no Christianity; where the fear of God and rectitude dwell, but yet not grace and peace in Christ Jesus.

He is a guest with a tanner (ver. 6). Even the house of a tanner could provide for Peter: for his pretended successor hardly a palace would be sufficient (Rieger).

He called two of his servants and related all things to them, and sent them (vers. 7 and 8). Cornelius had to thank his God-fearing and kind family government, that there did not now fail him men to whom he could entrust such a business. What a decorous intercourse the fear of God establishes in a house! The greatest lord cannot place himself in a position of so much respect and love, as a master of a family who piously governs his house. Although this be not daily observable, yet it manifests itself on great occasions (Rieger).

Peter went up to the house-top to pray (ver. 9). "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet:" 1. In order that thou mayest not seek glory from man. 2. In order that thou mayest enjoy the blessing of privacy.—*About the sixth hour.* This was the quiet dreamy hour of noon, of which the ancients said, "Pan sleeps." But the living God, the Keeper of Israel does not slumber nor sleep at this hour, but watches over His people, and hears their prayers. And a true servant of God may at this hour be wakeful in spirit and fasting unto prayer.—The sixth hour was the mid-day hour of prayer, not only among the Jews, but also among the first Christians. Stated hours of prayers are in danger of abuse, inasmuch as prayer is esteemed superfluous except at this hour, and it is at this hour performed as a mere matter of custom; but, well understood, they are also of great service, inasmuch as with the stroke of the clock they remind of prayer, which otherwise is too readily forgotten, and they strengthen the devotion of individuals with the thought, Many now pray with me.—Prayer the heavenly guide of the Christian

through the course of the day. 1. Morning prayer. 2. Mid-day prayer. 3. Evening prayer.

He became hungry, and would have eaten (ver. 10). Bodily gifts are only rightly enjoyed when we have first in faith opened our mouth, as Peter, in prayer to God. Thus we taste, even in enjoying bodily blessings, how gracious the Lord is. God is ever the best provider (Apost. Past.).—*As they made ready, a trance occurred to him.* The earthly necessity of the body must be silent before the heavenly revelation. Thus the Lord at Jacob's well, at the same hour of noon, said, when His disciples brought Him food, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." And so Paul writes, "I am able both to be full and to be hungry," Phil. iv. 12.

And he saw heaven opened (vers. 11–13). This history is designed to show the apostle that the Gentiles are to be partakers of the grace of the Gospel. The Lord had already, indeed, at His ascension commanded His apostles to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations; but the old prejudice of the superiority of the Jews, and that the Gentiles can only be admitted to baptism by means of circumcision, and to Christianity by means of Judaism, cleaved so firmly to the heart of Peter, that it must be removed by a special revelation (Apost. Past.).—*Kill and eat.* If we will have the sweet in our office (eat), we must not avoid what is painful to flesh and blood (kill). First work, then enjoyment: first repentance, then grace (Apost. Past.).

But Peter said: Never, Lord (ver. 14). The same Peter who formerly would not permit the Lord to wash the feet of His sinful servant, now also does not believe that He can make that clean which according to the Jewish law was unclean. At both times, the same doubt of the condescension of the divine love and of the sufficiency of the divine grace.—The best persons often cleave so much to externals and ceremonies, that they are not at once diverted from them even by the divine command (Starke).—What the mouth was to a Jew, that the heart should be to a Christian: nothing unclean should enter therein (Quesnel).

What God has cleansed, that make not thou common (ver. 15). 1. A declaration against legal scrupulosity which esteems that as unclean in nature, society, art, and science, which yet God will sanctify by His Spirit, and render serviceable for His kingdom.

2. A declaration against pride and carnal delicateness; which shrinks affectedly or effeminately from contact with sinners and from condescension to the weak, who yet are included in the mercy of God, and shall be prepared for His kingdom.—What is clean before God, that make not thou common: but also, what is common before God, that make not thou clean.—Although the distinction which God made in the ceremonial law between the clean and the unclean has ceased, so that in the New Covenant to the pure all things are pure, yet the distinction remains which God has made in the moral law between the pure and impure. We must not call darkness light, nor light darkness. A teacher especially must have a holy zeal against everything that is unclean in himself and in others. Thus are the converted exhorted: Touch not the unclean thing; lay aside all uncleanness and wickedness; let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and continue in holiness (Apost. Past.).

This happened thrice (ver. 16). How many things must God try with His servants until they rightly comprehend Him! So also must the servants of Christ persevere in doctrine and exhortation, and not grudge repeating often the same statement. Thus, even now-a-days, this vision of Peter must ever be held up to us for doctrine, for correction, for comfort, and for exhortation.—The cloth bound at the four corners: or, "God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He may have mercy on all."—All manner of beasts in Noah's ark, and all manner of beasts in the linen cloth: two illustrious images of redeeming grace.—*What God has cleansed, that make not thou common:* a royal manifesto of evangelical freedom and grace directed against, 1. The nature of the Jewish law; 2. The pride of pharisaical castes; 3. The monkish flight from the world (contempt of marriage, etc.); 4. Puritanic censoriousness.—The vision of Peter on the house-top, a mirror for the heathen mission: to show, 1. Its heavenly origin; 2. Its immense field; 3. Its severe work; 4. Its doubts and difficulties; 5. Its divine promise.

But whilst Peter doubted in himself (ver. 17). We ought not to receive without proof, revelations and suggestions in divine things, but neither ought we to reject them (Starke).—*Behold, there stand men at the door.* Internal impulses and external events happening together, often lend a helping hand to each other, and disclose to us the will of God (Rieger).

They called and asked (ver. 18). So wisely does God rule and guide everything, that they call who are to be called (Starke).

While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said to him (ver. 19). Light is given to him who is sincere, and seeks the Lord in singleness of heart (Quesnel).—*Doubting nothing.* When the Spirit of God calls, then we must compel ourselves to occupations which our flesh and blood formerly shunned (Starke).

Behold, I am he whom ye seek (ver. 21). Thus speaks a true servant of Him who Himself says: If you will seek Me with all your heart, I will be found of you.—Though those seeking him were strangers, and their visit troublesome, and he was fetched in night and darkness on a dangerous way; yet a servant of Christ does not delay, when he is called in the name of the Lord.

They said, Cornelius the centurion, a God-fearing man (ver. 22). The love with which the servants speak of their master is a beautiful testimony for them, as well as for him.—*And to hear words of thee.* Cornelius was to hear words of Peter, not to see miracles done by him. The chief business of a teacher consists in the preaching of the word (Apost. Past.).

Then he called them in (ver. 23). We ought to do good to the household of faith; and particularly a bishop ought to be chaste, temperate, given to hospitality, 1 Tim. iii. 2 (Starke).

The best family government. 1. Founded on the fear of God, in which the master goes before the household. 2. Exercised in love, which takes from the command its harshness, and from the service its bitterness.—*The master of a family as he ought to be.* 1. Before God, a pious priest of his house. 2. Among his own, a true father of his house. 3. To those without, a benevolent landlord of his house.—*A God-fearing house, a place of blessing.* 1. Above the house, heaven is open: prayers ascend and the angels of God enter. 2. Within the house, dwell chastity and love among great and small, the master and the domestics. 3. Without the house, blessing flows by temporal benefits and an edifying example.—*The house of the Gentile Cornelius, a reproof to many a Christian house.* 1. There the fear of God and prayer: here a life without God and prayer. 2. There harmony and love between master and servants: here coldness and indifference, or enmity and hatred. 3. There liberality and com-

passion: here avarice or selfishness. 4. There angels of blessing from God and heavenly salvation: here the curse on the house, and destruction in time and eternity.

The messengers of the centurion at Peter's door: or, how proud heathenism humbly knocks at the gates of Christ's kingdom of grace. 1. The great gulf which had to be overpassed: Roman pride and Jewish prejudice. 2. The heavenly power which paved the way: with the centurion, the drawing of the Father to the Son; with the apostle, the emancipating spirit of truth and the constraining love of Christ. 3. The propitious welcome: on the part of the messengers, humble request; on the part of Peter, friendly reception.

The embassy from Cæsarea to Joppa. 1. A testimony of the poverty of heathenism. 2. An honourable testimony for the Gospel. 3. A glorious testimony for the wonderful power and love of God, who will have all men to be saved.

III. Peter goes with the messengers to Cæsarea, and, after having received information of the revelation imparted to Cornelius, proclaims the Gospel of Christ in his house; and as immediately the Holy Ghost was poured upon the Gentiles listening to him, he forthwith commands them to be baptized.

Chap. x. 23–48.

23 On the day following, he arose and went with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And on the day after, he came to Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his relatives and intimate friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius went to meet him, fell at his feet, and worshipped. 26 But Peter raised him up, and said, Stand up, I also am a man. 27 And in friendly conversation, he went in, and found many who were come together. 28 And he said to them, Ye know how unlawful it is for a man that is a Jew to associate, or to come unto a foreigner; but God has showed me that I should call no man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I without objection, when I was sent for. I ask then, what is the reason why ye have sent for me? 30 Cornelius said: Four days ago I fasted until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house; and, behold, there stood before me a man in bright clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are remembered before God. 32 Send then to Joppa, and call hither Simon, surnamed Peter: he is a guest in the house of Simon the tanner, by the seaside: who, when he comes, will speak to thee. 33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now we are all

here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of the Lord. 34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said:

In truth, I perceive that God respecteth not the person; 35 But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him. 36 The word which He sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, He is Lord of all, ye know: 37 What took place throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were possessed of the devil, for God was with Him. 39 And we are witnesses of all that He did in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they also hanged on a tree and killed. 40 Him has God raised up on the third day, and shown Him, 41 Not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. 42 And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He Himself who is appointed of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. 43 Of Him all the prophets testify, that, through His name, every one that believes on Him may receive forgiveness of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard the discourse. 45 And the believers of the circumcision who came with Peter were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any one hinder the water, that these be not baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they entreated him to remain some days.

Ver. 23. Ὁ Πέτρος after ἀναστάς is feebly attested; the name was without doubt added as the commencement of a church-lesson.

Ver. 24. The sing. εἰσῆλθεν and the plur. εἰσῆλθον are perhaps equally well attested; but the plur. is the later correction, because συνῆλθον and αὐτούς before and after are plur.; therefore the sing. is properly preferred by Lachmann and Tischendorf.

Ver. 25. The following addition in the Codex Cantabrigiensis (D. 6th century) and in the margin of the Syriac is a proof of insertions for the sake of embellishment, introduced in old MSS. in this history:—Προσεγγίζοντος δὲ τοῦ Πέτρου εἰς τὴν Καισάρειαν προδραμὼν εἷς τῶν δούλων διεσάφησεν παραγεγονέναι αὐτόν· ὁ δὲ Κορνήλιος ἐκπηδήσας καὶ συναντήσας αὐτῷ πεσὼν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας προσεκύνησεν αὐτόν.

Ver. 30. Lachmann, on the authority of some MSS. and versions, omits νηστεύων καὶ: yet it is sufficiently attested, and was perhaps omitted because no mention is made of fasting in ver. 3. Ὥραν after ἐνάτην has only one MS. for it, and is to be erased.

Ver. 32. Ὃς παραγενόμενος λαλήσει σοι is awanting in A.B., some cursive MSS., and versions, yet is amply attested; it was only omitted because it is not in the parallel ver. 6.

Ver. 33. Ἐνώπιόν σου instead of τοῦ Θεοῦ is too weakly attested to be preferred (as by Griesbach), especially as σου appeared more suitable, and is

thus the easier reading.—Ἀπό is more strongly attested than ὑπό, which appeared to be grammatically recommended: also κυρίου is decidedly better attested than Θεοῦ.

Ver. 36. Lachmann omits ὅν after λόγον on the authority of A.B. and some versions; yet it is decidedly attested, and was perhaps omitted in order to make the sentence more simple.

Ver. 37. Ἀρξάμενον has indeed fewer MSS. for it than ἀρξάμενος, but nevertheless it is genuine: the nominative does not suit the construction.

Ver. 39. Ἐσμεν after ἡμεῖς is without doubt spurious.

Ver. 42. Αὐτός: the number of testimonies is in favour of οὗτος, which Lachmann has preferred; but οὗτος is probably a correction, because it recurs in this context in a regular manner.

Ver. 48. Τοῦ κυρίου is without doubt the original, whilst some Codd. add Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, or have that name without τοῦ κυρίου.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *On the day following, Peter arose.*—Peter waited for the next morning to set out with the messengers of Cornelius (who required some rest), when six men of the Christian church at Joppa accompanied him of their own accord, perhaps also encouraged to do so by the apostle himself. Luke gives the exact number in chap. xi. 12. Accordingly there was a small caravan of ten men. They required more than one day for the journey of thirty miles; and it was not until the next day that they came to Cæsarea, consequently the fourth day after the intimation which Cornelius had received from the angel.

2. *But Cornelius waited for them.*—He could calculate their return upon that day; and not only he himself waited for the apostle and his own messengers (*αὐτούς*) with respectful eagerness, but he had also invited to receive this precious visit, brought about by God, his relatives and intimate friends, who were, without doubt, similarly inclined and religiously susceptible: so that the centurion could say with truth, "We are here present before God"—in recollection of God, and in pious looking up to Him. Accordingly, when Peter and his nine fellow-travellers arrived, and when with Cornelius, not only his whole house, but also his relatives and friends, were assembled, there was already a tolerable congregation.

3. *And as Peter entered*, namely, into the house of Cornelius (*ἐγένετο τοῦ εἰσελθεῖν*, a Hebraism, but unprecedented in this form), the master of the house went to meet him, and testified his respect, yea, his worship in the proper sense, by falling down

at his feet, a gesture which properly denoted divine adoration (*προσεκύνησεν*, where, however, the object *αὐτόν* is not named from monotheistic delicacy). The spurious addition to ver. 25 is remarkable, which is not content that Cornelius should wait for the apostle in his own house and go to meet him within it, but states that he is informed by a servant of the approach of Peter to the city, and leaves his house in order to go to meet him outside. There is here also no scruple to say directly, *προσεκύνησεν αὐτόν*. The Roman recognises in Peter an ambassador of God, and he has no hesitation in showing him divine honour, in which the heathen deification of men might co-operate. But Peter did not suffer this idolatrous honour for an instant: he raised him up, and called on him to arise, for that he also was a man.

4. *And in friendly conversation*, Peter went in, namely, into the room where those invited by Cornelius were assembled. Both times (vers. 25 and 27) the same verb is used (*εἰσελθεῖν*, *εἰσῆλθε*) without any more exact addition: however, the first time the entrance into the house is meant, and the second time the entrance into a particular room. Thus then the apostle met a considerable assembly (*πολλούς*),—a large field white already for harvest.

5. *Ye know.*—Peter forthwith addresses those assembled in common: frankly expressing himself about his presence in the house of a Gentile, he asks for what reason they had sent for him. The apostle addresses not only Cornelius, but all present, supposing them to be informed, and apparently taking for granted that Cornelius had sent for him in the name of all. He premises that they are aware that a Jew should not so connect himself with a foreigner (*ἀλλοφύλῳ*, chosen from delicacy, instead of the name heathen) as to associate intimately with him (*κολλᾶσθαι*), step or come into close intercourse with him, enter his house. *Ἀθέμιτον* is *nefas*, not permitted: the forms *ἀθέμιστος* and *ἀθέμιτος* are interchanged even in classical Greek. There is in the law of Moses no literal prohibition of this kind; even its spirit does not accord with it. But rabbinical Judaism has certainly carried the separation from the Gentiles so far: thus it is said, *Prohibitum est Judæo solum esse cum ethnico, itinerari cum ethnico*, etc. (Lightfoot). Also the circumstance in John xix. 28 proves that the Jews in the time of our Lord thought that they would be levitically defiled, if they entered

the house of a Gentile. There have indeed been exceptions to this rule, but Peter speaks of the established custom. The apostle, however, declares that God had showed him (ἔδειξεν of a symbolical vision) that he should call no man (ἄνθρωπον with an emphasis, indicating and establishing universality) common or unclean—treat or avoid him as such. Therefore, on account of the divine intimation, he had raised no objection, but had come immediately after he had received the call. Now he would hear, more exactly than had been told him by the messengers, the reason of the invitation.

6. *Four days ago, I fasted.*—Cornelius first relates the intimation imparted to him by the angel, and then requests Peter to announce to him and his assembled friends what he, as the messenger of God, had to say to them (vers. 30–33). The expression ἀπὸ τετάρτης ἡμέρας μέχρι ταύτης τῆς ὥρας is differently understood, both as regards the *terminus a quo* and as regards the *terminus ad quem*. 1. Ἀπὸ τετάρτης ἡμέρας cannot mean the fourth day before, that is, before the angelic appearance (De Wette, Neander), otherwise the day itself, which is so important, would not be given at all: but the sense can only be, *quarto adhinc die*, on the fourth day reckoning from to-day, —a mode of expression which occurs in an entirely analogous manner in reference to distance of space (John xi. 18, xxi. 8; Rev. xiv. 20): Chrysostom gives this meaning, and since his time it has been generally adopted. 2. The *terminus ad quem*, μέχρι ταύτης τῆς ὥρας, does not mean until to-day and the present hour (Bengel), for Cornelius relates nothing of the interval since the appearance of the angel until the present, but speaks merely of that day and of the event itself: if the above were the sense, ἤμην would not occur. Cornelius states not only the time when the angel appeared to him, but also the condition and state of preparation in which he was exactly at that time. He was praying and fasting, when suddenly an angel in bright clothing stood before him, with the message that God had heard his prayers and graciously remembered his alms, and with the direction to send to Joppa for Peter, who would speak with him, that is, instruct him in the name of God. Lastly, he declares that they were all present devoutly waiting upon God, and ready to hear what Peter at the command of God had to say to them.

7. *Then Peter opened his mouth.*—A solemn announcement

of the statement about to be made, premising something important. This statement consists, 1. of a preface (ver. 34) concerning the equal acceptableness of all men, without distinction of nation, in the kingdom of God, provided only they fear God and do righteousness; 2. of a short representation of the life and work of Christ until the judgment (vers. 36–42); 3. of an assurance, on the ground of the prophetic word, that through Christ every one who believes on Him will receive the remission of sins (ver. 43).

8. *In truth, I comprehend.*—*Ἐπ' ἀληθείας*, on the authority of truth, so that this knowledge rests on truth, is truth. *Καταλαμβάνω*, act., occurs with the meaning to convince, because one as it were *obstrictum tenet* the person in fault, when one convinces him: *καταλαμβάνομαι*, pass., I am convinced, spiritually overcome by the power of facts and evidences, so that I acknowledge and comprehend that God is not partial in the choice to His kingdom. (See Dogmatical and Ethical Thoughts.)

9. *The word.*—The construction of vers. 36–38, in which Peter recalls the chief facts of the life of Jesus as being to his hearers not entirely unknown, is somewhat loose. There are three successive sentences to each of which *ὑμεῖς οἴδατε* belongs as the governing words. What the hearers already knew in a general way is indicated in a threefold manner: 1. as the word of a message of God to the Israelites, *τὸν λόγον*, etc. (ver. 36); 2. as an historical event, *τὸ γενόμενον ῥῆμα*, etc. (ver. 37); 3. as the person of Jesus of Nazareth, *Ἰησοῦν*, etc. (ver. 38). This is undeniably a climax. Peter supposes that the history of Jesus was not altogether strange to his hearers although Gentiles, partly by reason of their residence at Cæsarea in the Holy Land, and partly by reason of their religious disposition and susceptibility; and that it had come within the sphere of their observation, (*a*) as a word addressed to the Israelites, (*b*) as an occurrence in the land in which they dwelt, and (*c*) as the appearance of the divine person of Jesus of Nazareth. As regards the grammar, there is no reason to unite *τὸν λόγον* in ver. 36 in the construction with ver. 34, and to make it dependent on *καταλαμβάνομαι*, as Tischendorf does, who puts a comma after *ἐστί* in ver. 35; as also De Wette, Baumgarten, and Lange. This connection cannot possibly be introduced otherwise than in a forced manner: whilst to connect *λόγον, ῥῆμα,*

and *Ἰησοῦν* with *οἴδατε*, appears indeed to accumulate and crowd the ideas together, but yet entirely corresponds with the flow of thoughts which at this instant moved the soul of the speaker. Thus especially is the parenthesis *οὗτός ἐστι πάντων κύριος* to be explained: as Peter mentions the name of Jesus for the first time to his hearers, he feels himself constrained to testify that the same is Lord of all (*πάντων*, not neut., but mas.), namely, of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. He adds this the more, as he had said that the joyful message of peace (salvation) which was published by Jesus was sent by God to the Israelites. Lest the Gentiles might think themselves placed in the background, he declares that the Prophet by whom God had proclaimed this message of peace is at the same time, Lord of all. In ver. 38 Peter comes to speak of the person of Jesus; and he describes Him both according to His earthly origin (*ὁ ἀπὸ Ναζ.*), and also according to His heavenly endowment with the Holy Ghost and with power (*ἔχρισεν* in explanation of *Χριστός*), for the purpose of healing and saving actions, and according to His intimate union and fellowship with God. *Καταδυναστεύω* is *potentia mea opprimo, tyrannidem exerceo in aliquem.*

10. *And we are witnesses.*—In ver. 39 Peter passes to the death and resurrection of Christ, His commands to the apostles, and His approaching advent to judgment. *Καί* with *ὃν ἀνεῖλον* hardly indicates the other persecutions to which Jesus was exposed, to which even His crucifixion was added (Meyer); but it is inserted only because a further chief matter from the life of Jesus is specified—His death and resurrection. With *μάρτυσι*, etc., Peter gives us to understand that the testimony of Jesus was eminently a testimony of His resurrection; and precisely to this does the parenthesis *οἵτινες συνεφάγομεν*, etc., refer, which is not to be extended to the three years of the ministry of Jesus (Bengel), but to be limited to the forty days intervening between the resurrection and the ascension: for precisely the circumstance that the disciples ate and drank with the Risen One qualified them to bear witness, from experience, of the actual and corporeal life of the Saviour after His resurrection. Peter here ascribes the choice of the apostles as witnesses to God Himself, because their calling by Jesus was a choice of God.

11. *And He commanded us.*—*Παρήγγειλεν* has Jesus for its subject rather than God. The last commission given by the

risen Redeemer was that the apostles should, 1. preach to the people Israel (ὁ λαός, the Jewish people), and 2. testify (namely, to men in general: here there is no restriction as with κηρῦξαι) that He Himself was ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead (a universal idea, comprehending the whole human race of all ages). The truth, that in Christ there is salvation for all, is most distinctly expressed in the concluding sentence of the speech (ver. 43): every one who believes on Him will receive remission of sins through His name. This Peter places as the unanimous testimony of all the prophets, by which he evidently supposes that the prophecies of the prophets of Israel were not unknown to Cornelius and his friends.

12. *Whilst Peter yet spake these words*, had not yet concluded, the Holy Ghost fell upon his hearers. Ἐπέπεσεν does not necessarily intimate a visible descent (*modo conspicuo*, as Bengel renders it), but only the sudden entering of a higher power working upon them from above. That the effects of the Holy Ghost were perceptible, not indeed visibly, but audibly, is clear from ver. 46: "they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." What they uttered was humble, earnest, and inspired praise to God, and thanks for His grace. The manner in which they spake was γλώσσαις λαλεῖν. It is, however, to be observed that ἑτέραις is not added, as in chap. ii. 4; but it is rather to be conceived as the meaning of the historian, that those hearers spoke with tongues, as the Corinthian Christians, namely, in elevated devotion, and with a speech deviating from the intelligible mode of expression of common life. The observation of this makes an extraordinary impression upon those Jewish Christians who came with Peter: ἐξέστησαν, they could not restrain their wonder, because that on the Gentiles also was poured forth the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Jewish Christians evidently thought, not only on these individual persons with whom they had come in contact, but on their character as Gentiles; and they inferred from this fact the general proposition, that the Gentiles may receive the Holy Ghost.

13. *Can any one hinder the water?*—Peter makes forthwith the practical application: these have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, believers of Israel (καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς); who, then, can refuse water that these may be baptized? The peculiar

manner in which the question is expressed sounds as if there was attributed to the water of baptism a conscious and energetic will: as if Peter had said, If no one has been able to hinder the Spirit from coming upon these people, so also can no one restrain the water which wills to flow over them at baptism. In other words, every scruple regarding the baptism of these Gentiles is, in fact, removed by their baptism of the Spirit. Accordingly Peter orders them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. The apostle did not perform the ordinance himself, but enjoined some one of the Christians who had come with him to do so. At the close, Luke relates that Cornelius and his friends entreated the apostle to remain some time longer with them; and we may venture to suppose that this request was not declined. This residence would, without doubt, be employed in the further instruction of the newly converted in the Christian faith and life.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The reverence with which Cornelius received the apostle, was an expression of deep humility, and of high esteem toward Peter as a true ambassador of God. But there was mixed with it something which was not pure and sound, a delusion, as though Peter were surely more than a man. Herein already lay the germ of the adoration of saints, which gives to a man a worship that belongs only to God, derogates from the peculiar glory of the triune God, and misleads Christianity in respect of the way of salvation. And it is observable, that this first case of an honour more than human rendered to a servant of God, occurs with a heathen. The entire saint-worship, as it gradually developed itself in the ancient Church, is essentially of heathen origin, and a relapse into heathenism. But Peter, whilst he wholly rejects this extravagant honour, raises Cornelius from his knees, and declares plainly that he, the worshipped, was only a man as well as the worshipper, has at the same time, according to the maxim *principiis obsta*, protested at the first symptoms against an error which only developed itself at a later period in a most serious manner. Thus there here stands already, in the history of the apostles, a warning against the paganizing worship of saints—against mixing the divine with the human.

2. It is notorious that the introductory words of Peter's discourse (ver. 34) are often understood in the sense, as if in them were implied the equal value of all religions, the superfluousness of faith compared with morality, and the indifference of specific Christian belief for the salvation of the soul. But, as even De Wette judges, it is the "greatest exegetical trifling" to find in these words a palliation of indifferentism. Both the words themselves, and the entire connection of the discourse and history of which it forms a part, decidedly contradict this notion. In the whole occurrence, nothing else is treated of than the conversion of Cornelius, and his reception, and that of his household and friends, into the Church of Christ. To this a weighty scruple stands in the way; namely, whether these persons, being Gentiles, could with a safe conscience, and so that it was right before God, be received into the Church of Christ without further ceremony; or whether they must not first be incorporated among the people of Israel by circumcision? The whole transaction has its chief point, its specific import, in nothing else than in the removal of this scruple by a divine interposition. If the meaning of the expression in ver. 34 were, that heathen, Jew, and Christian were entirely the same before God, and that the one will be saved as well as the other, provided only he live honourably and uprightly, then might Peter have left Cornelius where he was, as a heathen, instead of converting him to Christianity. Thus the connection of this declaration with the whole history, of which it forms an integrant part, decides against that notion. Again, as regards the expression in question: it consists of a negative and of a positive proposition. The negative proposition is, that God does not regard the person (*οὐ προσωπολήπτης ὁ Θεός*), that is, takes no account of the external peculiarities of a man, but of the internal and moral essence of his character. As riches or poverty, station, appearance, and party connections ought not to influence the decision of a judge, but only justice and moral facts, so, says Peter here of God, that He does not regard the external relations of persons, their external gifts or defects. This appears at first sight to import little, and to be a very trivial truth, which every intelligent Israelite must long have known. Peter certainly knew this truth by rote. But we have a general knowledge of many a truth by rote, which becomes as it were clear

to us under peculiar circumstances and by the illumination of the Spirit of God, and which shines in an eminently clear light, especially when a yet unknown application of it occurs. And this was here the case with Peter, when, by the providence and revelations of God, he was fully convinced that God, in respect of grace in Christ and reception into the divine kingdom, makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile, and that thus also the appertaining to the people of God is only an externality. That circumcision does not avail an Israelite, without the fear of God, was already often enough and strongly enough testified by the prophets. But that, on the other hand, the want of circumcision and of subjection to the Mosaic law does no injury to the Gentiles, forms no obstacle to their full citizenship in the Church of Christ, this was, for Peter, a surprising application of the well-known truth. And this was also in regard to sin and grace, to the Old and New Covenant, a knowledge forming an epoch in the Church.

The positive proposition is, that "in every nation He who feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him." Ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει makes a special application of the universal negative proposition, particularly to nationalities, and here to the contrast between the Jewish and Gentile nations. But here both the subject and the predicate of the proposition have to be rightly understood. The subject is, "every one that feareth God and worketh righteousness, of whatever nation he may be." Two moral qualifications are here named, and it is not rightly explained when the one qualification is identified with the other; in particular, when the pious or God-fearing disposition is discovered entirely in rectitude of conduct toward our neighbour. To this the interpretation of indifferentism is inclined. Peter says, on the one hand, if there is the fear of God and righteous conduct, no further national advantages are required; but, on the other hand, he supposes this disposition to be an absolutely indispensable condition of the divine acceptance. Accordingly, he only can reach the end in question, that is, the divine acceptance, who in any way whatever (but then by means of change of mind and conversion) has obtained such a moral disposition. The end is expressed in the predicate δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστιν, literally, *acceptabilis Deo est*, he is in such a state that God may and will accept him, receive him, namely, into His kingdom, so that he

is saved. It is evident from the whole context, that reception into Christianity is here meant. If, however, δεκτὸς is not to be taken exclusively in the sense of acceptable, but, as it elsewhere occurs in the New Testament (Luke iv. 19, 24; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Phil. iv. 18), as *acceptus*, *gratus*, still we may, according to the apostle's entire mode of thought, think only on the acceptance of God in Christ. Accordingly, Peter ascribes to every God-fearing and righteous person, of whatever nation he may be, only the capability of being saved by Christ, not the ability of being saved without Christ. Bengel has with reason referred to the parallel passage in chap. xv. 14, where, at the apostolic council, James, with reference to this history, and indeed especially to the passage before us, uses the expression λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαὸν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ sc. Ἰησοῦ, where λαβεῖν corresponds to δεκτός. Thus the acceptable reception of the Gentiles into the people of God through Christ is the immediate object of which this passage treats; and summing up everything, as it is strikingly observed by Bengel: *non indifferentismus religionum, sed indifferentia nationum hic asseritur.*

3. What Peter testifies in this missionary discourse of the person of Christ, is less detailed than what he testifies of His work. On the one hand, he indicates the humanity of Christ, calling Him Jesus of Nazareth; for the descent of the Redeemer and His human origin are thus referred to. And, on the other hand, he says of Jesus, ὁ Θεὸς ἦν μετ' αὐτοῦ. This, it is true, is an expression which, as it can possibly hold good of a prophet and servant of God, does not necessarily predicate anything peculiar of Jesus; but yet the expression may also have a significance which confers on Jesus of Nazareth a pre-eminent position. God was with Him, and indeed not merely in a transitory, but in an abiding manner—not merely externally, but internally. Bengel thinks that the apostle has spoken *parcius, pro auditorum captu, de majestate Christi.* However, at least indirectly, by means of what Peter says concerning His work, the divine majesty of Christ is apparent especially in His exaltation, which decidedly towers above everything human. He is πάντων κύριος, and is appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead—an office which supposes the divinity of Christ.

4. Peter has very fully and instructively described the work

of Christ. He places foremost the *prophetical* office of Christ. God has proclaimed peace by Jesus Christ; hence the message of peace, the word, the doctrine of Christ comes into the foreground. But he likewise mentions the works of Christ, His cures and good works to the sick and demoniacs. The deed harmonized with the word: the word proclaimed peace and salvation, the deed effected peace and salvation. He was a Prophet mighty in word and deed. His doctrine proclaimed saving truth; and wherever He went about in person, He worked savingly, making whole, delivering those who were sighing and bound under the tyranny of Satan. The deed corroborated the word; and if Christ were now to cease to bestow reconciliation, salvation, peace, and freedom to enslaved souls, His word of the Gospel would find no more belief.—The *priestly* office of Christ is indicated in ver. 43: "Through His name, whosoever believeth on Him receives remission of sins." How this is the case is certainly not developed. It is a missionary proclamation that Peter makes, not an explanation of recognised truth according to its ground and its connection. But remission of sins through His name, that is, through His person, does undeniably suppose that He personally is the Mediator of divine grace and forgiveness, that is to say, that He has effected the reconciliation.—Lastly, the *kingly* office of Christ is displayed, both from ver. 36, *πάντων κύριος*, and from ver. 42, *κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν*. He is highly exalted, the Lord of all men, Jews and Gentiles, so that all are bound to honour and obey Him. Christ has therefore a kingdom which He governs, and that kingdom embraces the whole human race. The climax of this glory is, that Christ is appointed the Judge of the world, yea, the Judge even of the dead; so that His kingly power embraces even the lower regions and the generations long since dead, as well as those who are still unborn.

5. The doctrine, to which the whole discourse exclusively points, is expressed in ver. 43: that every one receives remission of sins through Jesus Christ who believes on Him. The universal character of the statement again concentrates itself in *πάντα*. This concluding sentence has a threefold bearing; it refers to mankind, to the Mediator, and to the way of salvation. That all men are sinners, it asserts indirectly by offering forgiveness to all, and thus declaring that all require forgiveness.

That Jesus Christ is the only Mediator and Reconciler, that no one can receive forgiveness and grace from God except through Him, is here at all events clearly proclaimed. Lastly, faith in Christ, the confiding acceptance of the Redeemer, as the direct way, yea, as the only way of salvation (the centre-point of which forgiveness is), is clearly and unmistakeably exhibited. Thus then in this single sentence the whole Christian doctrine lies *in nuce*.

6. The most decisive fact in the whole event was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the hearers. This was an actual testimony of God Himself, that these persons were pleasing to Him, and that they belonged to Christ. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the highest blessing which, according to the Acts of the Apostles, is to be acquired in the kingdom of Christ. To whom this chief blessing, which according to the nature of the case God only can give, is granted, to him cannot that which is less be refused. But now God has given His Holy Spirit to these men, although they were Gentiles, and purified and sanctified them thereby. What God has cleansed, that must no man regard as unclean and treat as profane. Thus these Gentiles must be recognised, even by the strictest Israelites, as clean and sanctified by God. Baptism is the consecrating reception into the Church of Christ and into the grace of God by water and the Spirit. As the baptism of water alone does not suffice without the baptism of the Spirit, so the baptism of the Spirit must not remain alone without the baptism of water. Usually the gift of the Spirit follows the baptism of water in time (chap. ii. 38), sometimes only after a long period, and in consequence of special prayer and imposition of hands (chap. viii. 15). Here the Holy Spirit, who bloweth where He listeth (John iii. 8), comes upon the hearers before they were baptized; but now no man can and dare refuse the water of baptism, otherwise he would be found *θεομάχος* (chap. v. 39). Thus this outpouring of the Spirit upon the Gentile hearers is an unmistakeable divine declaration, that it was not necessary for the Gentiles first to be incorporated into the people of Israel by circumcision and acceptance of the law, before they could be received into the Messianic kingdom of Jesus.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Certain brethren from Joppa went with him (ver. 23). A

teacher does well, especially in such cases, where weak minds still find scruples, if he causes his actions, of whose rectitude he is convinced from God's word, to be seen by them (Apost. Past.).

And had called together his relatives and friends (ver. 24). The chief work of love and friendship is to wish that others also are made sharers of spiritual gifts (Starke).—We are made poor when we share our earthly riches with others; but the more we impart spiritual riches by love, the more are we ourselves filled with them (Quesnel).—We have indeed to exhort awakened souls not to suffer themselves to be diverted from the kingdom of God even by their dearest friends, but not to give up all acquaintance with them, but rather to use it as an opportunity of spreading the kingdom of Christ (Apost. Past.).—We are often in spiritual matters too reserved with one another, and would often find more access than we expect (Rieger).

Cornelius fell at his feet; but Peter said, Arise, I also am a man (vers. 25, 26). With the confession, "I am a sinful man," Peter was taken into employment by Jesus to become a fisher of men. And now, when to him so good a draught was at hand in the house of Cornelius, he again expressly reminds himself and others, "I also am a man" (Rieger).—Cornelius showed too great veneration to a living, corporeal, and undeniable saint: who then will pray to doubtful, fictitious, and painted saints (Starke)?—He is not a true successor of Peter, and has not his humble mind, who suffers his feet to be kissed.—It is here seen how soon awakened souls may go too far in putting too much confidence in those who are only God's servants, and in giving them too much honour. This does not please but grieves a true servant of God; he is willing that he should decrease, in order that Christ might increase (Apost. Past.).—The word of Peter, "I also am a man," a reproving mirror of repentance for all idolizing of men in the Church: not only, 1. In the Romish Church, against the adoration (*a*) of the saints in heaven, (*b*) of the pretended successor of Peter on earth; but also, 2. In the Evangelical Church, against (*a*) the over-estimation of the ministerial office, self-conceit, and glorification on the part of ministers; (*b*) the idolizing of the reformers or living preachers and ministers—a conversion to man instead of to the living God, on the part of the Church.

God has showed me (ver. 28). This certainty that he stands before them not in his own, but in God's name and authority, strengthens Peter mightily, and raises him above all scruples of conscience, as if he had broken through Jewish ordinances and Jewish customs (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*To call no man common or unclean.* A beautiful faith in the sparks of divinity in every human soul. 1. Its good ground: (*a*) by creation, after the image of God, all from one pair; (*b*) by redemption: God will have all men to be saved; Christ sends His apostles to all nations; (*c*) by experience: in the heathen world, in the pastoral oversight of criminals, etc. 2. Its beneficial influence: (*a*) for the Christian contemplation of the world and conceptions of history in general, (*b*) for Christian intercourse in daily life, (*c*) for the Christian ministry.

Therefore came I without gainsaying (ver. 29). This is the holy silence of faith, when, without striving against God, we willingly undertake what He commands (Calvin).—"Whom God sends, he is sent."—*I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?* As the physician asks his patient what ails him, that he may effect his cure; so the teacher asks his hearers concerning the state of their souls, in order to know what they need: doctrine, counsel, comfort, or exhortation (Starke).—Our obligation to fidelity in office requires us to waste no time in spiritual matters in unnecessary talking, but to go to the matter itself, the sooner the better (Quesnel).

Cornelius said, I fasted unto this hour (ver. 30). A modest narration of what we have done right is not at variance with humility, but is often necessary for our justification, or useful for the edification of others (Starke).—Fasting, prayer, and alms were in the house of Cornelius not dead works of the law, but the true fruits of repentance, ripened in the depth of a humble soul, loving God and longing after the assurance of His grace (Leonh. and Spieg.).—Therefore Luke gives to Cornelius first this praise and testimony, that he was devout and God-fearing, and only afterwards that he as a good tree brought forth good fruits, and such fruits as were well-pleasing to God, on account of his faith: therefore also the angel praises Cornelius on account of the faith which he had in a coming Christ, and brings him from faith in a coming Christ to the faith of Christ who has already come, when he bids him send to Joppa and call

Peter (Luther).—*In shining garments.* The angels wear in their appearances the signs and livery of their purity and uprightness (Quesnel).—The bright clothing of the angel may remind a teacher, who also is called an angel in the Holy Scriptures, that he above others has reason to wash his robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Thy prayer is heard (ver. 31). The prayers and alms of Cornelius came up before God. To the lot of how few prayers and alms does this favour fall! The most proceed from a carnal and earthly heart, and therefore go the way of the flesh, and abide on the earth. But the prayer of faith has wings to soar to God, and the alms of love mount up to heaven as an offering well-pleasing to God (Leonh. and Spieg.).—No prayer rises to heaven, but an angel descends from heaven (J. Arndt).—*On the connection between the prayers and alms of Cornelius and his call to the Gospel.* 1. How were his prayers and alms produced? 2. How was his calling connected with them? (Schleiermacher).

Send therefore and call (ver. 32). The angel directs him to the ordinary minister of the word; for even the tongues of angels cannot preach from experience the forgiveness of sins as a Peter (Stier).—Cornelius is not sent to Peter, but Peter is brought to him, by which was indicated, that the Gospel was to go to the nations into their own habitations (Bengel).

Thou hast well done that thou art come (ver. 33). A noble welcome for a minister on his entrance upon office. 1. When it is the Lord who leads him hither. 2. When it is a congregation desirous of salvation who expect him.—*Now we are all present before God.* These words should be inscribed on all our church-doors and pulpits, that men may consider well wherefore they ought to be in the church (Bogatsky).—*Who are the truly blessed church-goers?* 1. Those who have prepared themselves at home with prayer. 2. Those who came with hearts desirous of salvation. 3. Those who hear and keep the word of the preacher as the word of God (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The congregation in the house of Cornelius, an image of a congregation pleasing to God.* 1. A numerous congregation: "Now are we all here." 2. A devout congregation: "present before God." 3. A congregation desirous of learning: "to hear all things." 4. A tractable congregation: "that are commanded thee (and us by thee) of God."

Then Peter opened his mouth (ver. 34). Opened hearts of believers open the mouth of teachers (Starke).—The discourse of Peter flows forth as a mighty stream, which buries the remembrance of Cornelius and his virtues as in the stillness of an unfathomable ocean. Cornelius' name, every individual name, the name, glory, and honour of all men, are extinguished, and one name only shines in this discourse, and that is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of the works of Cornelius and of all men, only the works and deeds of God in Christ are thought of. All our own righteousness sinks us into a deep ocean, but that ocean is the infinite love of God (Harless).—*In truth, I comprehend.* Let no teacher think that he already knows everything that belongs to his office so fully, that he has no necessity to increase in such knowledge. It is one thing to know something theoretically and in general, as Peter certainly long ago knew that there is no respect of persons with God; and it is another thing, as Peter here says, to understand it practically and in application to a special case. And so the apostle had not earlier known that the Gentiles, without circumcision, may be received into the kingdom of God (Apost. Past.).—*God respecteth not persons.* 1. A terrible truth for all the ungodly among the great. 2. A comfortable truth for all the pious among the poor.

In every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him (ver. 35). These words are commonly abused by those who assert, that it matters not what a man believes, provided he only fears God and works righteousness, avoids sin and lives honourably. But the apostle does not here teach latitudinarianism in religion, but proclaims the universal love of God to all nations, according to which He will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. He says not, that a man who fears God from a natural feeling, is somewhat concerned about his salvation, avoids gross sins, and lives outwardly honourably, is accepted by God, and in a state of grace—this he is only in Christ, Eph. i. 6; but that such a one is in a position to be brought to God by the word of Christ, and to be accepted by the Lord without circumcision. Had Cornelius, as he was, been already accepted before God, he would have required no angel and no Peter, no Gospel and no Saviour, no baptism and no Holy Ghost (Apost. Past.).—Not the equality of all religions,

but of all nations, is here expressed (Bengel).—Peter will say: Now I perceive that God is no sectarian, that He will not save only the Jews or a certain nation and condemn all others, as formerly I so unjustly thought of Him. He asks not, Hast thou a certificate? Where hast thou become a member? He who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, seeks it in faith, and exercises his faith in love, is pleasing to God, that is to say, has grace, otherwise he could not do it; he is a candidate for the true religion and Church, he is not far from the kingdom of God, to him God will reveal His Son. Faith in the Son of God, therefore, is the only saving religion. Thus the door is opened, not to freethinkers, but to the hungry (Gossner).—*Who is pleasing to God?* 1. He who fears Him in humble penitence. 2. He who trusts Him in filial faith. 3. He who does righteousness in grateful love.—The declaration of Peter, "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him," according to its genuine sense. 1. Not a licence for the unbelief of the world, or a repudiation of the believing zeal of the Church; 2. But an invitation for men desirous of salvation, and a warrant for missionary work among all nations.

This ye know (ver. 36). Although we already know something, yet is necessary to be anew reminded, afresh assured, and plainly informed of it in the sermon (Starke).—*Peace by Jesus Christ.* The preaching of Christ, a preaching of peace. 1. According to its contents and aim, (*a*) peace with God, and thereby (*b*) peace with one another: Jews and Gentiles reconciled. 2. According to its ways and means: (*a*) its messengers are messengers of peace—Peter as contrasted with the Roman centurion; (*b*) its weapons are weapons of peace—the Gospel contrasted with the punitive nature of the law.—*He is Lord of all.* The great comfort of faith, that Jesus, as the Prince of peace, is also Lord of all. 1. His sceptre is a sceptre of peace, therefore no fear of Him. 2. His sceptre is an almighty sceptre, therefore no fear for Him and under Him.—*Peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all!* This the best salutation of an ambassador of faith in the heathen world. Thereby his entrance becomes, 1. Friendly, for he comes in the name of a Prince of peace; 2. Courageous, for he comes in the name of an almighty Lord.

Beginning from Galilee (ver. 37). The preaching of peace by the Prince of peace concerned certainly, in the first instance,

the children of Israel. Therefore it proceeded from Galilee, and took place throughout all Judea; but the peace which He proclaimed and has procured by His death on the cross, was a peace for all nations of the earth (Leonh. and Spieg.).—What wonderful ways and victorious courses has the Gospel, in the power of God, accomplished since that small beginning in Galilee! Never even when she one day rules the whole earth, shall the Church of Christ forget this beginning in Galilee; this her low origin, her poor childhood, her birth-form of a servant.

How God anointed Him (ver. 38). The miraculous life of the Saviour was known over the whole land, but its commencement, the anointing with the Holy Ghost at baptism, was a quiet secret (Stier).—*Who went about doing good.* A delightful description of the doings of Jesus. Such a picture teachers should exhibit to desponding souls who regard Jesus rather as an angry Judge than as a Benefactor and Saviour, in order that they may place their trust in Him. And how must this comfort and encourage a witness of Jesus, when he considers that he has with him such a Saviour, who has already given so great proofs of His goodness! Of what power of the devil therefore has a true teacher to be afraid? (Apost. Past.).

And we are witnesses of all things (ver. 39). Upright teachers even now are witnesses of what Jesus has done and suffered, although they have not seen His actions with their bodily eyes (Apost. Past.).—*Whom they hanged on a tree and killed.* By the shame of the cross is Satan conquered, and by it must the Gentiles be converted; therefore Peter is not afraid to acknowledge before the Gentiles that Jesus was hanged on a tree. It is foolish to conceal from unbelievers what is shameful and painful in the Christian religion. Are we wiser than the apostles and Jesus? (Starke).—Welcome, O Cross, sign of the living God, sign of the greatest triumph! Welcome, O glorious, precious Cross! brighter than the sun, and clearer than all the stars, thou givest light to those who contemplate thee with the eyes of faith and love. Once thou wast cursed and thy name ignominious, but now thou sparklest on the thrones of kings. Who has abolished thy shame and raised thee to such honour? No other than Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. When the sinful earth disowned Him, He ascended thee; thou receivedst Him, and bore the precious burden of His body; thou wast the

altar on which was offered the spotless Lamb who reconciled earth with heaven (Eckbert).

Not to all the people, but to us (ver. 41). Jesus in His manifestation wisely observes a distinction. The world does not see Him in the state of exaltation, because it will not recognise Him in the state of His humiliation: He manifests Himself to His own (Starke).—The gracious manifestations of the exalted Christ, a privilege of believers.—The secret consecrated hours of believers in intercourse with their glorified Master. *Procul este profani!* is said at the heathen mysteries: this has also its value in the holy mysteries of Christianity.

Summary of vers. 36–43.—*The apostolic sermon.* 1. What it testifies: the life, sufferings, and resurrection of Christ. 2. On what it is founded: on the command of Christ, and the call of all men to salvation. 3. What it aims at: the salvation of believers by the peace of Christ (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*How we have peace through Jesus Christ.* 1. As our Prophet (vers. 37–39). 2. As our Priest (vers. 39–43). 3. As our King (vers. 40–43).

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all (ver. 44). Here is the Pentecost of the Gentiles (Quesnel).—It is a blessed and hopeful sight when the servants of God observe in their hearers, that the word takes effect among them, and the Holy Ghost works by it powerfully in their hearts (Apost. Past.).—The word of the grace of God in Christ Jesus is the word by which the Holy Ghost with His gifts comes into the heart. The preaching of the law serves only as a preparation. A teacher may by much preaching of the law make people outwardly orderly and conformable to the law, but cannot awaken spiritual life in them.—God often comes before (as here by the communication of the Spirit) the ministry of the Church (baptism), in order that it may be seen how He has supreme power, and is not bound to external forms (Quesnel).

Believers of the circumcision were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost (vers. 45, 46). We must not grudge the gifts of God's grace to others, but congratulate them upon them, and praise the Lord for them (Starke).—The works of God in His Church are still great and wonderful, and whoever observes them has only pure pleasure therein (Apost. Past.).

Can any one forbid water? (ver. 47). Whom God Himself legitimizes by the Spirit, to him the Church ought not to refuse its recognition.

And commanded them to be baptized (ver. 48). Although God effects something in an extraordinary manner, yet His Church must observe the ordinances prescribed to it (Quesnel).—The ordinary means of grace are never to be despised (Starke).

On the whole section.—The greatness of the love of God in Christ to us men. 1. It regards no man as common or unclean. 2. It goes after the erring, when they only seek it. 3. It pities all who are inclined to hear all things that are commanded us by God in Christ (Harless).—*Only in Christ is complete salvation.* Only in Him is revealed, 1. The true knowledge of God, 2. the true dignity of man, 3. the true way of life, 4. the true satisfaction of the soul (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The visit of Peter to the house of Cornelius, a model of a blessed ministerial visitation.* 1. The preparation for it: with the household, an earnest desire of salvation; with the minister, a holy impulse of the spirit. 2. The conversation at it: on the part of those confessing, an honest exhibition of the state of their heart; on the part of the father-confessor, a powerful testimony of Christ and His salvation. 3. The fruit thereof: for the hearers, strengthening and vivification by the Holy Ghost; for the minister, joy in the Lord over rescued souls and the increase of His kingdom. —*Peter's journey to Cæsarea, a mirror for the heathen mission.* 1. Its divine mandate (vers. 1–23). 2. Its blessed message (vers. 24–43). 3. Its successful issue (vers. 44–48).

C.

Peter, by appealing to the manifest guidance of the Lord in this matter, effectually overcomes the objections of the narrow-minded Jewish Christians in Jerusalem to fellowship with the Gentiles, so that they are silenced, and thank God for the conversion of the Gentiles.

Chap. xi. 1–18.

1 But the apostles and brethren throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 But when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they of the circumcision disputed with him, saying, 3 Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. 4 But Peter

began and explained it in order to them, saying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, a vessel as a great linen cloth let down from heaven by the four corners, and it came even to me. 6 And when I looked into it, I observed and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping beasts, and birds of heaven. 7 But I heard a voice saying to me, Arise, Peter, slay and eat. 8 But I said, Never, O Lord, for nothing common or unclean has ever as yet entered into my mouth. 9 Then a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God has cleansed, that make not thou common. 10 And this was done thrice, and all was drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately there stood three men before the house, where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me. 12 But the Spirit spake to me, that I should go with them. There went also with me these six brethren; and we entered into the man's house. 13 And he showed us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, Send to Joppa, and call for Simon, surnamed Peter, 14 Who will speak to thee words by which thou and all thy house will be saved. 15 But as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how He said, John baptized with water, but ye will be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17 If then God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, how then was I able to resist God? 18 When they heard this, they were silenced, and praised God, saying: Thus has God also to the Gentiles given change of mind unto life.

Ver. 2. Ὅτε δέ is by MSS. and versions better attested than καὶ ὅτε.

Ver. 8. Πᾶν before κοινόν is feebly attested: without doubt it was inserted in some MSS. from chap. x. 14.

Ver. 9. Μοι before φωνή is awanting in good authorities; it was probably inserted to correspond with ver. 7.

Ver. 12. Μηδὲν διακρινόμενον is omitted by Tischendorf as spurious, because it is awanting even in that MS. D. (Cantabrig.) which in this section has inserted the most glosses in the text, whilst in other MSS., some have διακρίνοντα, others διακρίναντα, and others διακρινόμενος. The Sinaitic MS., with an uncial MS. of the second rank (Basler.), has διακρίνοντα. The great diversity in the readings makes it probable that both words are a later addition inserted from chap. x. 20.

Ver. 13. Ἄνδρας after Ἰόππην is awanting in important MSS. and in most versions; it is here inserted from chap. x. 5.

Ver. 17. Δέ after ἐγώ is awanting in A.B.D., the cursive MSS., and many versions, and therefore Lachmann has erased it. But it is attested by E.G.H. and a few versions. It would hardly have been inserted if originally awanting, as it would appear to be superfluous.

Ver. 18. Ἐδόξαζον is much stronger attested than ἐδόξασαν, preferred by Lachmann, which is a correction for the sake of uniformity.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But the apostles heard.*—The occurrence with Cornelius caused a sensation in the Church of Christ. Even before Peter

returned to Jerusalem, the apostles and Christians in Judea (*κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν*, throughout Judea, dwelling in different parts of the province) received information that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. The manner in which the fact is stated, shows, in the first place, that the impression among the apostles and the majority of Christians in Judea was favourable; for that the Gentiles also, thus not the Israelites only, had received the Gospel, was to the glory of God. In the second place, the expression *τὰ ἔθνη* imports that the event was regarded as of primary and conclusive importance, by considering that what individual Gentiles had done, was an event which proved that the Gentile world had shown a susceptibility for the word of God.

2. *Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.*—The disciples did not all regard this event in the same way; and with some, doubts might gradually have arisen, which supplanted the first favourable impression. This showed itself when Peter returned to Jerusalem. He was blamed by those *ἐκ περιτομῆς*. Who are they? The expression is similar to that in chap. x. 45, *οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς πιστοί*, only in that passage there is nothing strange in it, as Peter, with his Jewish Christian companions from Joppa, was in Gentile company—among the uncircumcised. Here, on the contrary, in Jerusalem, there was at that time among the Christians not a single one who was not an Israelite, and circumcised. If, then, in the midst of the Jewish Christian Church *οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς* are prominently brought forward, this cannot denote the external religious and national fact of being circumcised, but only the internal views and feelings. The phrase thus describes those Jewish Christians who placed a peculiar value on circumcision, and without doubt also on the observance of the law of Moses in general. And with this agrees what follows in ver. 3. These men *διεκρίνοντο πρὸς αὐτόν*, disputed, contended with Peter (*διακρίνομαι*, *secernor*, *pugna decerno*, *dimico*), reproaching him with entering into the house of uncircumcised men, and sitting down with them at table. Here accordingly *ἀκροβυστία* and *περιτομή* stand opposed to each other. These strict men of the circumcision did not reproach Peter for preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles and baptizing them: they could not well pronounce that wrong, especially in reference to the command of Jesus to

preach the Gospel to all nations: but they could not reconcile with their strict notions of the law, and of the dignity of an Israelite, that he entered into familiar intercourse with the Gentiles, went into a Gentile house, and was a guest at the table of an uncircumcised man. These opponents, if they carried out their principles, could only have thought that those Gentiles who hear and believe the Gospel must first be circumcised and completely incorporated with the people of Israel, before a Christian—that is to say, a Jewish Christian—could enter into unrestricted intercourse and consent to have brotherly fellowship with them. This was certainly the judaizing principle in its proper sense.

3. *But Peter began.*—Ἀρξάμενος is intended not merely to describe Peter as beginning to speak, but also to intimate that he expatiated, and related the occurrence from its commencement. With καθεξῆς, Luke indicates that the explanation which Peter gave was orderly,—going regularly over and following the succession of events. For it is precisely the fitting in of single events in this history which produces a convincing and overpowering impression. The revelation of God to Peter in the vision, receives its application and meaning by the sending of the messengers from Cæsarea directly coinciding with it, and by the contemporaneous indication of the Spirit to go with them. And when Peter arrives at the house of Cornelius, it follows from the account given by Cornelius, that he was commanded by God to send for Peter, in order to hear the words of salvation from his mouth. Lastly, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit follows immediately upon the evangelical proclamation to Cornelius and his friends. Thus, then, the separate parts fit together; one point illustrates, explains, and confirms another; and the whole does not only make a harmonious impression, but also incontestably testifies that God wills it. On account of the importance of this transaction as bearing on the extension and progressive development of the Church of Christ, Luke here repeats from the mouth of the apostle the narrative of the preceding chapter in its chief features.

4. *But the Spirit said to me.*—From οὗτοι with οἱ ἐξ ἀδελφοί, it would seem that the Christians of Joppa, who had gone with Peter to Cæsarea, now also accompanied him to Jerusalem. This would easily take place, if Peter, as is probable, returned

directly from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. Besides, it is possible that Peter anticipated the probable opposition of some in Jerusalem, and wished to have these brethren with him as witnesses of the divine guidance in the affair.

5. *But as I began to speak.*—The expression ἐν τῷ ἄρξασθαί με λαλεῖν supposes that Peter had not yet concluded, but would have said more when the discourse was interrupted by the unexpected event. Peter, with special intention, brings prominently forward the identity of this communication of the Holy Ghost which ensued with the original communication of the Spirit: in ver. 15, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐν ἀρχῇ, namely, in the beginning of the outpouring of the Spirit; and in ver. 17, τὴν ἴσην δωρεὰν—ὡς καὶ ἡμῖν πιστεύσασιν, etc. Πιστεύσασιν here is to be referred to the subject nearest it, ἡμῖν, not to the more distant one, αὐτοῖς (Kuinoel); also not to both pronouns together, for the addition, as Bengel well observes, will point to faith in Christ as the condition on which alone Christians at the beginning had received the gift of the Spirit: Not because we were Israelites, not because we are partakers of circumcision, but because we have believed on Jesus as Lord and Messiah, did God confer on us the gift of the Spirit, and indeed as a free gift of grace, without any lawful claim to it, without God's owing it to us.

6. *Then remembered I the word of the Lord.*—The recollection of the word of Jesus (related both in Luke iii. 16 and in Acts i. 5) has not only the meaning that Peter lived to witness an extension to the Gentiles of the gift promised in the first instance to the apostles (Meyer); but the chief point lies in the relation between the baptism of water and the baptism of the Spirit, in this sense: the Lord has promised to us His baptism, as the baptism of the Holy Ghost: if now He conferred on the Gentiles the baptism of the Spirit, which we at an earlier period received, then the baptism of water can and durst not be refused, otherwise it would be represented in a wholly erroneous manner, as something more important and holier than the baptism of the Spirit.

7. *If now God gave to them the like gift.*—A just inference is contained in this concluding question: "How then was I able to resist God?" Δέ, in the conditional sentence, brings prominently forward a contrast; and this here, where two questions

are combined, is twofold. Peter asks, Who was I in comparison? and, Was I then able to hinder God? The first question contrasts God and man; the second, the almighty will and work of God, and the weak strength of man. In both respects it was impossible to hinder God, namely, in His counsel to save these Gentiles, and to incorporate them as well as born Jews into the kingdom of Christ.

8. Accordingly, Peter has not restricted himself to the special objection which was brought against him in respect of his intimately associating and eating with the Gentiles; but he has made the gracious design of God concerning them, as expressed by the unmistakeable acts of God, the chief basis of his justification. And if this point were made clear and convincing, then was also the self-defence of the apostle, in respect of his associating with the Gentiles, successful. That was, according to ver. 18, actually the case. For, in consequence of this statement, the objectors not only expressed themselves satisfied (*ἡσύχασαν*), so that they in silence withdrew their reproaches, but they glorified God, because that God had also to the Gentiles given repentance unto life. The distinction of time between *ἡσύχασαν* and *ἐδόξαζον* gives us to understand, that the pacification of the opponents was instantaneous, whilst their thanks and praise to God were enduring.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The fact, that within the primitive Church there arose a difference in respect of the procedure of Peter with Cornelius, so that even reproaches were made against the apostle on account of his conduct, is not concealed from us. Similarly as in Acts vi., discontent shows itself: there indeed only directed by one party of the Church against another, but here by a part of the Church against an apostle. The sacred history does not attempt to place believers in an ideal light, in which such facts must be concealed, but it represents everything according to truth. Even the apostolic Church does not shine in such a unity as would suffer no difference. And although originally a zeal for God lay at the bottom of the discontent toward Peter and of the complaint against him, yet it is clearly a zeal without knowledge, in which also moral errors co-operated. Yet this is related to us with all candour, not simply for the sake of historical truth, but that we

may be warned and reflect: Let him who stands take heed lest he fall.

2. The conduct of the Apostle Peter, when reproaches were made against him, is truly evangelical and according to the mind of Jesus, but is not hierarchical. Very far from falling back upon his apostolic power and authority, or defending himself on an alleged primacy—very far from arrogating to himself an infallibility in principle, and declining all explanation and justification, he permits his opponents to express themselves fully, and he defends himself with all calmness and mildness, in such a manner that he makes the facts so speak that the opponents freely admit themselves to be vanquished. Thus the discussion serves only *in majorem Dei gloriam* (ver. 18, ἐδόξαζον τὸν Θεόν), and more so than if it had been insisted on, that the apostle must beforehand be in the right, and that he was not obliged to defend himself against the contracted views of the laity.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

But the apostles and brethren heard (ver. 1). A single family sometimes diffuses the good savour of Christ to a great distance (Quesnel).—It remains an eternal glory for Peter, that he ventured to be the first to direct the poor Gentiles by the Gospel to Christ. Although nothing further is said or heard of us in the world than this—The man takes pains to save sinners by the Gospel, and his labour is not fruitless; here a sinner is apprehended, there one sighs after grace; this one rejoices over the peace of his soul, and that one walks according to the Gospel, and all regard the man as a faithful example; that is an abiding praise before God.—*Cæsarea and Antioch, Jerusalem's joy.* This is the substance of the entire chapter. The Lord overcame the carnal thoughts of the believers of the circumcision, so that they were silent, and praised God for what had happened in Cæsarea, and stretched forth fraternal hands to Antioch, in order that that might be accomplished which the sign of Cæsarea indicated. Before Luke represents to us the course of the Gospel from Antioch to the end of the earth, he makes us attend to the unity of the Spirit in which Antioch stood with Jerusalem; but Cæsarea is the band of peace wondrously woven by the Lord between Antioch and Jerusalem (Besser).

But when Peter came up, they of the circumcision disputed with him (vers. 2, 3). How has not wisdom still to justify herself against many censures and objections, on account of her children and her mode of gathering them! Who will do anything so well that it is not exposed to some opposition? Such opposition must often balance the joy which one might have at a good progress, so that he may remain the more surely in the humility and moderation in which Peter is now found (Rieger).—The church at Jerusalem did not recognise Peter for a pope, when they here called him to account (Starke).—Disputing in religious matters, it is true, seldom ends without offence; but yet it has often its use, in bringing the truth more into light.—We observe in this dispute: 1. That even among God's saints, no one has been without blemish and folly; and though indeed we can put in no comparison the great breaches of our modern Zion with the little gaps in the primitive Church, yet the Church has been at all times an hospital, and will ever continue so, in which the sick and infirm are cured by the true Physician, Jesus. Let no one, therefore, despair, if he must exercise his office among the living and the dead, among the healthy and the sick. 2. But, on the other hand also, we must not put down the faults of the saints as wickednesses. There are people who, with reference to the righteous, strain at gnats, whilst otherwise they will swallow camels: others, who look at the failings of the apostles through a magnifying glass, as if they had not rightly understood the mind of their Master, spoiled His plan, etc., because they themselves can never establish their doctrinal system, except on the ruins of the apostolic doctrine: and there are still others who, in their transgressions, use the faults and sins of believers in the primitive Church as an excuse. To all these we must make evident the distinction between faults and weaknesses, and between faithlessness and imperfection: we must show them how the faults of believers are not recorded for our example, but for our warning: we must enjoin them to repent and do the first works. Especially teachers have to guard against a quarrelsome disposition, and to think on the word of Paul: Whoever wishes to dispute, let him know that we have no such custom. 3. If we have truly recognised and experienced the universal love of God, we will be able to judge better of many events which concern the kingdom of God, although they occur with-

out the limits of our confession, and will not indulge in too great a zeal against other religions. We will rejoice, if still here and there a soul is gained, though in the manner in which it was effected we should have to censure this or that. 4. It was those of the circumcision who took offence at the baptism of the Gentiles, believers among the Jews who, from love to the ordinances of their fathers, and misinterpretation of scriptural passages, held the keeping of the law of Moses to be necessary. A remnant of Jewish leaven yet fermented in them, and through them in the primitive Church. There is seen from this the strength of old and deeply-rooted prejudices even among the converted. Especially subtile legalism is of such a nature, that it readily sprouts afresh, where it has ruled in a powerful manner before conversion (Apost. Past.).—*The weaknesses of believers* to be regarded: 1. Not as testimonies against the faith, but as proofs of human weakness, which is not yet completely overcome by faith; 2. Not as palliations of personal sins, but as sign-posts, that he who stands may take heed lest he fall.—*The rents in the primitive Church* represented: 1. For humility, in order to observe from them the power of the enemy, who never neglects to sow tares among the wheat. 2. For comfort, in order to recognise in them that nothing new or strange befalls the Church in the rents and divisions of the present. 3. For doctrine, in order to see from them how the rents are to be healed by the power of evangelical truth and love.

But Peter began, etc. (vers. 4–17). See here a beautiful example of humility, especially in a teacher. He gives an account of his conduct with meekness, according to his own exhortation (1 Pet. iii. 15, 16); very differently from the bishops of Rome, who will be judged by no man (Starke).—Here he was a true Peter, who stood firm as a rock against the attacks of his brethren, and suffered himself neither to be shaken in his convictions, nor to be thrown out of his tranquillity and meekness. How would we have stood this trial,—we who are often so sensitive and impatient even at the friendly admonitions of kind friends, or perhaps allow ourselves to be led astray by human opinion in that which we have recognised as the will of God? (Apost. Past.). —The defence of the apostle is throughout calm, natural, clear. He accurately relates the affair according to all its circumstances, and especially brings forward what must serve for his

own vindication; as, for example, his own prejudices at first, the heavenly vision, etc. This mode of defending his innocence by a simple narrative of the facts and circumstances of the case is the most suitable to Christianity, as truth and uprightness ought to be the foundation of all our actions (Apost. Past.).—*The justification of the Apostle Peter before the Christians concerning the baptism of the Gentiles.* 1. That he justified himself. 2. How he did it (Schleiermacher).

When they heard this, they were silenced (ver. 18). The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, but the weak must let themselves be taught by the strong (Starke).—To err is human, but deliberately to persevere in an error of which we are convinced is devilish. How much damage has obstinacy in defending erroneous propositions, once adopted, caused to the Church of God! (Apost. Past.).—*The objections of human short-sightedness against the wonderful ways of divine wisdom*, ending, 1. in abashed silence; 2. in joyful praise of God.

On the whole section.—Peter's defence before the brethren, a model of brotherly vindication. 1. By its evangelical meekness and humility. 2. By its apostolic firmness and uprightness.—*The best testimony of a servant of God against opposition and misapprehension.* 1. The divine injunction, of which he is conscious. 2. The eyes of men, under which he acted. 3. The tranquillity of spirit, with which he can vindicate himself. 4. The fruits of his work, to which he is permitted to point.—*Thus hath God also to the Gentiles given repentance unto eternal life.* See herein, 1. The greatness of divine grace; 2. The blessing of human repentance.—*The reception of the first Gentile family into the Christian brotherhood.* 1. A glorious triumph of divine wisdom and compassion. 2. A beautiful proof of Christian humility and friendliness. 3. A powerful incitement to live for the salvation of souls.

SECTION IV.

THE PLANTING OF A GENTILE-CHRISTIAN CHURCH AT ANTIOCH. THE MUTUAL FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH AND LOVE BETWEEN THIS CHURCH AND JERUSALEM. SAUL IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH. (CHAP. XI. 19–30.)

A.

The founding of the Church at Antioch by the Hellenists.

CHAP. XI. 19–21.

19 Now they who were scattered, since the trouble which arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but to the Jews only. 20 But some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene who came to Antioch, and spake there to the Greeks, preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number, who believed, turned to the Lord.

Ver. 19. Ἐπὶ Στεφάνῳ is both by MSS. and versions and fathers better attested than ἐπὶ Στεφάνου, which certainly arose from understanding ἐπὶ to be a preposition of time.

Ver. 20. Ἑλθόντες is far better attested than εἰσελθόντες in the textus receptus, which has only one MS. for it.—The reading Ἕλληνας stands opposed to Ἑλληνιστάς. The number of testimonies are indeed in favour of Ἑλληνιστάς: B.E.G.H., almost all cursive MSS., and many fathers support it. Ἕλληνας has A.D. (in the writing of the original scribe), the Sinaitic MS., Eusebius, Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Œcumenius for it. Internal reasons decide for Ἕλληνας, for this only forms a contrast to Ἰουδαίοις, ver. 19, whilst the preaching the Gospel to the Hellenists was nothing new and remarkable. Therefore already Grotius, Usher, and Bengel preferred Ἕλληνας, and it is received by Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf.

Ver. 21. Ὁ before πιστεύσας is awanting in most uncial MSS., and is only in A. and B.: but it is to be retained as genuine, as it would hardly have been inserted, if not originally there. Lachmann and Tischendorf have received it.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *Now they were scattered.*—Luke returns to the Christians who, in consequence of the hostility, which was at first directed against Stephen and thereafter against the Church in general, had become fugitives: ἀπὸ τῆς θλίψεως, away from the trouble,

or since that event. The θλίψις Luke indicates more exactly as that which broke out about Stephen, or which originated on account of Stephen.

2. What is the connection of this narrative with the preceding? That some connection exists is indicated by οὖν. At first sight this appears to be the most obvious, that the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles at Antioch was to be represented as a consequence of the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius. Thus Kuinoel, Schneckenburger, and Lange. It is asserted that the example of Peter authorized and facilitated similar steps and further attempts to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. But, on the one hand, there is wanting any precise connection of the fact here following with the conversion of Cornelius; indeed, what is related in ver. 19 must, in a forcible manner, be understood as a parenthesis, in order to establish this connection: διῆλθον ἕως Φοινίκης καὶ Κύπρου καὶ Ἀντιοχείας λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον μηδενὶ ἄλλῳ ἢ μόνον Ἰουδαίοις must be directly conjoined with οὖν. And, on the other hand, it is evident from ver. 19, that Luke connects the narrative with the history of the persecution of which Stephen was the sacrifice. In fact, Luke here takes up the thread of discourse left off at chap. viii. 4, and indeed with precisely the same words as stood there: οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες διῆλθον. The historian certainly unites this event, the first founding of the church at Antioch, with the conversion of Cornelius, as an event of a similar kind, namely, as an extension of the Church of Christ beyond the limits of Judaism; but he does this without placing both occurrences in a direct causal connection. Even the position which the history of the founding of the church at Antioch occupies, gives no reason to place the first conversion of the Gentiles at Antioch later in point of time than the conversion of Cornelius. On the contrary, the connection of the conversion of the Gentiles at Antioch with the persecution (chap. viii. 1) argues that that event might have happened before the occurrence at Cæsarea. For, they who were dispersed after the death of Stephen would probably proceed directly on their journey, until they found, some in one place and others in another, an abode of peaceful residence and unhindered activity—a portion of them in particular at Antioch. And here surely many years would not elapse, until one or other of them preached the word of Jesus Christ among the Gentiles. But, on the other hand, it is certain from the life of

St Paul, that between the death of Stephen, which preceded Paul's conversion, and Paul's residence at Tarsus, during which the church at Antioch already existed, at least three years intervened.

3. *Travelled as far as Phenicia.*—Luke relates in ver. 19, that the Christians dispersed after the death of Stephen (of whom, from chap. viii. 1, we only know that they were scattered in the districts of Judea and Samaria) went in part over the north and north-west boundaries of Palestine to Phenicia, the neighbouring island of Cyprus, and beyond to Antioch, the capital of Syria. They preached the Gospel wherever they came, and probably laid the foundation of the church at Tyre, mentioned in chap. xxi. 7. However, they were accustomed to preach to none but to the Jews, as this is supposed even from chap. viii. 4, where only Philip in Samaria, and afterwards by special intimation from God in the case of the court-officer of Meroë, was an exception.

4. *But some of them were.*—Now something new and important occurs. Some of those Christians, who by their flight from persecution had become missionaries, were men born in the island of Cyprus and in the African province of Cyrene; therefore all Jewish Christians dwelling among the Greeks, that is, Hellenists. These, when they came to the great city of Antioch, certainly inhabited by many Jews, turned to the Greeks, that is, to the Gentiles, with the preaching of Jesus as the Lord. (See critical note to ver. 20.) Antioch, six hours distance from the sea, on the Orontes, was founded by Antiochus, the father of Seleucus Nicator, the founder of the kingdom of the Seleucidæ. It was one of the many Greek colonies which sprung up in consequence of the Macedonian conquests in the East. In consequence of this, the Greek language and culture prevailed there, although the ground-stock of this settlement, which rapidly rose to be the first city of the East, was Syrian. Accordingly, those Israelites, who had found their home in Gentile countries of Greek civilisation, were the instruments by whom the Gospel was first brought to Gentiles of Greek culture, and indeed with success: a great number of Gentiles believed and were converted to Christ. This was the work of the Lord; for His hand, His mighty spiritual operation, accompanied the labours of these zealous Christians.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The kingly power of Christ, as He to whom is committed all power in heaven and in earth, and the wonderful and adorable wisdom of His government, shine forth conspicuously from the fact that the persecution which cost Stephen his life, and induced many Christians to flee from Jerusalem, was converted into a means for the extension of His kingdom. What man thought for evil, that God converted into good; and what appeared to be dangerous and pernicious to the Church of Christ, that proved ultimately beneficial, under the guidance of the Lord. If the Christians were forced to flee from one city, they betook themselves, according to the direction of the Redeemer, to another, and found at length a quiet and secure residence. If the primitive Church, hitherto so strictly exclusive, was caused to break up, the Gospel was, precisely by this means, spread in different places. The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of the Crucified One, and the cross is His mark. No soul grows to perfection without the cross; and the Church of Christ increases, not only internally, but very often externally, under the cross. This time must the cross—the persecution—serve for the spread of the Gospel, not merely outside of Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, but also beyond the limits of the Holy Land; indeed, outside those barriers which separate Israel and the Gentile world.

2. Those who were scattered by the persecution spoke the word, preached the Gospel of Jesus, wherever they came. Without being apostles, or otherwise office-bearers of the Church of Christ, yet they evangelized. They knew in whom they had believed, were anointed with the Holy Ghost, and "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Thus they became involuntarily itinerant preachers—missionaries even to the Gentiles, whilst some preached Jesus at Antioch to the Greeks. And that they did not act presumptuously in doing so, the blessed success proved: the hand of the Lord was with them, and many Gentiles were converted by their word. Accordingly, the Lord of the Church Himself gave His approbation to and legitimized this extra-official activity. God, in Cornelius and in the Apostle Peter, had sanctioned the principle of the conversion of the Gentiles; but the first successful inroad into the territory of heathenism, the founding of the metropolis of Gentile Chris-

tianity, of the church at Antioch, was effected not by Peter or by any other of the apostles, but by simple members of the Church.

For Homiletical Hints, see below.

B.

The Church of Jerusalem sends Barnabas to Antioch, who strengthens the young Church there, and brings Saul to it.

Chap. xi. 22–26.

22 But news of them came to the ears of the church at Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should travel as far as Antioch. 23 And when he arrived, and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and exhorted them all, with purpose of heart, to cleave to the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith. And a considerable number were added to the Lord. 25 But he departed to Tarsus to seek Saul: and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. 26 And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled in the church, and taught much people, and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Ver. 22. Διελθεῖν is awanting in A.B. and in many versions, and is omitted by Lachmann; it is, however, sufficiently attested, and would sooner have been left out as unnecessary than inserted, if originally awanting.

Ver. 25. Ὁ Βαρνάβας and αὐτόν are both spurious: the first is awanting in A.B.D., although D. has received a large extension of this verse into the text.

Ver. 26. The reading αὐτοῖς, which in relation to the second sentence of the verse is evidently the more difficult, has three important Codd. and a number of cursive MSS. for it, on which account it was properly preferred by Tischendorf and Lachmann to the reading αὐτούς. It appears more doubtful whether καί before ἐνιαυτόν is genuine, which, after A. and B., Lachmann and Tischendorf have received, whereas it rather seems as an addition for the sake of emphasis.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *But the news of them came:* namely, of those voluntary missionaries to the Gentiles; for αὐτῶν, as in ver. 21, must be referred to the evangelizing Hellenists of ver. 20. The news of their doings among the Gentiles, and of the success of their preaching at Antioch, came by hearsay to the church at Jerusalem; and they evinced their interest in the matter and in the young church at Antioch, chiefly formed of converted Gentiles, by sending Barnabas thither. This mission was so

much the more friendly and suitable, as Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, from which many of the Christians who had spread the Gospel in Antioch came. Barnabas was thus particularly related to the men who had laboured there, both generally as a Hellenist, and specially as a native of Cyprus.

2. Barnabas, by the directions of the original Church, was to inspect the state of matters at Antioch, and to act and take measures according to circumstances. Now what he saw on the spot were such proofs of the grace of God which had accompanied the work of the evangelists, and had prevailed among the newly converted Gentiles, that he could only heartily rejoice. He found nothing to blame, or even to improve, but had only to exhort all the members of the Church to stedfastness and fidelity to the Redeemer. They should τῇ προθέσει τῆς καρδίας, with purpose of heart, cleave to the Lord: that is to say, form to themselves the firm resolution, and carry it into effect, to cleave to Christ. By this παρακαλεῖν of Barnabas we are reminded of the circumstance mentioned by Luke (chap. iv. 36), that he had received this surname—a son of prophetic address or exhortation—by reason of his special gift: so that we may well suppose, that these exhortations which he addressed to the Christians at Antioch were eminently spiritual, powerful, and earnest discourses. The remark of Luke, that he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, also indicates this. The predicate ἀγαθός indicates not only moral worth in general, but specially goodness, a kindly disposition; with which strikingly agrees the remark, that he rejoiced at the spiritual condition of the newly couverted.

3. *And he, when he arrived.*—The success of the mission of Barnabas was twofold: first, by his personal labours in the church of Antioch, the number of converts increased considerably; and secondly, it was of the highest importance, and of far-reaching consequences, not only for this church but for the whole Church of Christ, that Barnabas brought Saul in connection with the church at Antioch. This was not a thought originating in Saul independently of others, but it was Barnabas who induced him to go to Antioch. According to chap. ix. 27, it was Barnabas who, at an earlier period, brought Saul to the apostles at Jerusalem, and placed him in connection with the primitive Church there; and now it was the same man who

brought Saul to Antioch, and placed him in organic intercourse with the promising church of Gentile Christians, with this metropolis of Gentile Christianity. The conversion of Saul was most exactly known to Barnabas, and therefore he undoubtedly knew the declaration of the exalted Redeemer, that He had chosen Saul to bear His name before the Gentiles and kings. And thus the idea,—Saul chosen for such great things, and in particular for the conversion of the Gentiles,—would suggest itself, and that not without the illumination of the Holy Ghost, to Barnabas, whilst resident in this young, but yet considerable Gentile church; so that this would be clear to him: This is the place for that man; such a sphere of labour is suited to him; he is the right man in the right place. Therefore he travelled forthwith to Tarsus, in the neighbouring country of Cilicia, to seek Saul in his native city, whither he had withdrawn from the snares of the Hellenists at Jerusalem. Saul had there disappeared for a time, not only from his enemies, but also from his Christian brethren: he had as it were vanished, so that he had to be sought out (*ἀναζητῆσαι*), and as it were discovered anew (*εὑρὼν*). Barnabas induced him, by entreaties and representations, to come to Antioch; and Saul actually returned thither in his company. Thus Saul stepped upon the theatre, where his peculiar work was to be developed, both in extent and in depth. At first, he laboured in company with Barnabas a full year within the church of Antioch. "They assembled themselves with the Church:" that is, they laboured in the assemblies for public worship; for, to understand, with Meyer, *συναχθῆναι* of the hospitable reception which they met with, is unsuited to the context, because not Saul only is spoken of, but also Barnabas, who was already before this at home in Antioch; and also because *συνάγειν* is only used in this sense when *εἰς οἰκίαν* is added, or else when the context indubitably leads to it. Both taught much people; their activity accordingly embraced a wide circle: yet evangelizing is not so much to be thought of as instructing (*διδάσκειν*) the converted in the knowledge of the truth, and advancing their Christian life and conduct. It is, moreover, to be observed, that here for the first time the peculiar act of *διδάσκειν* is attributed to Paul, and certainly likewise to Barnabas, which (chap. iv. 2, 18, v. 25) is exclusively ascribed only to the apostles.

4. That the name Christian originated at Antioch is a notice for which we are indebted to Luke. It seems extremely unimportant, and is also mentioned in a very unpretending manner, but yet it is of weight. As such it appears, notwithstanding the unpretending form, even with Luke, from the context, where the fact of this giving of the name stands; namely, as evidence of the successful labours of Saul and Barnabas at Antioch. The first appearance of this name is thus in a manner an epoch in the history of the Church. It has long ago been with truth observed, that the name was not originally applied by the Christians themselves (for in the whole of the New Testament it occurs only in the mouth of those who were not Christians, Acts xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16), nor yet could have proceeded from the Jews (because they would not have given the sacred name of the Messiah to a hated sect, and thus, according to their notion, have profaned it). Accordingly, no other alternative remains, but that the name proceeded from the Gentiles. For this its form speaks, which is that of a political party name, as Herodians, Cæsarians, Pompeians, etc. To the Gentiles, who knew not the dogmatic and religious import of the name ὁ Χριστός as an appellative, it appeared as a *nomen proprium*, and accordingly they formed out of it a party name. The supposition of Ewald, going still further, that the name proceeded from the Roman government at Antioch, the residence of the proconsul of Syria, has this improbability against it, that the Roman government should have taken, at so early a period, official notice of the Christians. If, then, the name proceeded from the Gentiles, this circumstance formed an actual proof that an essentially new step in the development of the Church of Christ was reached. Hitherto the Gentiles, in spite of their frequent contact with the Christians, had not distinguished them from the Jews, nor recognised them as a separate class. This was only now the case, and that for the first time at Antioch; and is an evidence both of the numerous conversions among the Gentiles which must have occurred in this city (for if converted Israelites, in connection with the great number of Jews resident at Antioch, had formed the ground-stock of the Christian Church, the whole of the Christians would still have been identified with the Jews), and of the prominence of the special characteristic of Christianity, inasmuch as Christ was the

centre of the faith, love, and hope of the Church (*Χριστιανοί*). The origin of this name is thus historically important as a sign that the Church of Christ now forced itself upon the sphere of the world's history, and that the Jewish Christians began to be merged into the Gentile Christians. The supposition that the name "Christian" was originally used in mockery (Wetstein and Baumgarten) has nothing to recommend it, except the circumstance that the people of Antioch were notorious for their wit and satire.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Here the apostles, in a remarkable manner, retreat into the background. When Philip laboured among the Samaritans, the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God. The apostles sent thither Peter and John, two of their own number. But in this passage the conversion of the Gentiles at Antioch comes to the ears of the church which was at Jerusalem, and it is the Church that sends forth Barnabas: thus the Church, and not the apostolic college, is the sending party, and the party sent is not an apostle, but a member of the Church. It cannot, indeed, be doubted that the church at Jerusalem must be meant inclusive of the apostles, and not exclusive of them; so that the apostles co-operated in the delegation of Barnabas. But yet this is sufficiently striking, that the apostles who, in chap. viii. 14, stepped forward, here as it were step behind the Church, and only act with the Church. Even when it is fairly taken into account that at that earlier period, according to chap. viii. 1, the majority of the members of the Church were dispersed from Jerusalem by the persecution, and the apostles chiefly remained behind in the city, whereas at this time a numerous congregation might be collected there around them, yet the circumstance still remains of significance, that the person sent is a man who belonged not to the apostolic circle. This stepping back of the apostles must have reference to the nature of the affair under consideration. Baumgarten justly recognises in this a self-restraint of the apostles. This was not an egotistical and pettish withdrawal, but, in comprehension of the intimation of the Lord in His deeds, a compliance with His plan of salvation, united with a love tenderly and wisely meeting the necessities of the new Gentile Church; so

that Barnabas, that Hellenist of the island of Cyprus, was sent to Antioch.

2. The choice of Barnabas, as the representative of the mother Church to the Gentile Church at Antioch, was the fittest according to the mind of the Lord, who guides His Church. Barnabas immediately recognised the grace of God which had operated here, and rejoiced. He had only to exhort them to stedfastness and fidelity to Christ. As God is *οὐ προσωποληπτης* (chap. x. 34), so also this disciple, illuminated by the Holy Ghost, regarded neither the persons of those who had preached here, nor their converts, who were Gentiles, but directed his look to the grace of God, whose government and work he saw undeniably before him. Where the grace of God in Christ is unmistakeable, there a child of God rejoices and finds himself at home, though there should be something unusual and strange in the persons and their manners.

3. That Jesus Christ is the personal centre of Christianity, stands before us in a peculiarly striking manner in this history of the planting of Christianity in Antioch. The Hellenistic itinerant preachers proclaimed the Lord Jesus (ver. 20); many believed and turned to the Lord (ver. 21); Barnabas exhorted the converts with full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord (ver. 23); and much people were added unto the Lord (ver. 24). Living Christianity is a living personal union to the living personal Christ. Without faith in the living Christ, without a living union of character to Him, Christianity becomes a mere form and mask. Also the circumstance, that this name was given to Christians first at Antioch, argues that believers in that city cleaved to Christ as a person with peculiar earnestness; for otherwise this name would not have come so vividly before the Gentiles, who originated the name, that they should apply it to the members of the Church. It is striking that believers are not named after Jesus, but after Christ. That Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Anointed of God, the King and Lord of His redeemed, was the article of faith of which their hearts were full and their mouths overflowed, so that the name Christians, not Jesuits, was bestowed on them by strangers.

For Homiletical Hints, see below.

C.

The Church of Antioch evinces its brotherly fellowship with the Christians in Judea, by assisting them in a famine.

Chap. xi. 27–30.

27 But in those days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 And one of them, named Agabus, stood up and signified by the Spirit, that a great famine would come over the whole habitable world: which also occurred under Claudius. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. 30 This also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Ver. 28. Μεγάλην—ἥτις has a greater number of Codd. for it than the masculine μέγαν—ὅστις.—Καίσαρος after Κλαυδίου is awanting in important testimonies, and is to be considered as an explanatory insertion.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *In those days*,—namely, when Barnabas and Saul tarried as teachers with the church at Antioch,—came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them stood up (ἀναστάς) in an assembly for public worship, and prophesied by the illumination of the Spirit, that a great famine would break out over the whole known world. Both the phrase ἐσήμανε—μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι (which gives us to understand a manner of expression by signs and symbols, and leads us to suppose that Agabus, in like manner as on a later occasion, chap. xxi. 10, indicated the coming famine by some symbolical action), and the addition διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, indicate an actual prophecy of a purely future occurrence. On this account, it is not consistent with the text to suppose that at that time the famine had already commenced (Eichhorn), or that at least symptoms of it were already present (Heinrichs). Besides, the conclusion of ver. 28, "Which also occurred under Claudius," supposes that this announcement took place earlier, and was, in fact, authenticated by events happening afterwards. This is the first determination of time, with reference to an otherwise known historical date, which we find in the Acts of the Apostles. Claudius reigned as successor of Caligula thirteen years, 41–54 A.D. In his reign the Roman empire was more than once visited by famine, and particularly Palestine, under the procurators Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius

Alexander (Jos. Ant. xx. 2, 6; 5, 2), about the years 45 and 46, when king Izates of Adiabene and his mother Helena assisted the inhabitants of Jerusalem with corn which they purchased in Egypt. The famine mentioned by Luke, as at all events it happened in the reign of Claudius, could not have occurred earlier than the year 41; and, as it is probably identical with that mentioned by Josephus, it could hardly have taken place before the year 45. But as not only Palestine, but also Italy and other provinces of the Roman empire, were visited about that time by scarcity and famine (Tacitus, Annal. xii. 43), we may regard the prophecy of Agabus as fulfilled, the more so that the compass of the prophecy is not exactly known to us.

2. *Then the disciples.*—Whether the Christians at Antioch, directly on the prophecy, or only on the later information of its fulfilment and of the actual famine in Judea, came to the relief of the churches there, is doubtful from the words of ver. 29. However, the last is the more probable: 1. because that prophecy embraced the world, and only the actual result proved that a great famine had attacked the land of Judea (see Joseph. Ant. xx. 5, 2, *τὸν μέγαν λιμὸν κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν—γενέσθαι*); 2. because Luke evidently gives us to understand (chap. xii. 1, 25) that Barnabas and Saul did not bring the contribution to Jerusalem until Herod resided there as king, indeed until toward the close of his reign, thus about the year 44. The disciples at Antioch resolved, every one according to his ability (*ηὐπορεῖτο*), to send relief as a ministry of love (*εἰς διακονίαν*) to the Christians in Judea, with whom they felt united as brethren (*ἀδελφοῖς*). What they proposed to do, they also carried into effect by sending Barnabas and Saul as the bearers of their charity to the elders. As the synagogues in the countries of the Gentiles and proselytes, like king Izates, came to the assistance of the Jews in Palestine in times of necessity, so the Christian Gentiles thought that they were under obligations to assist their brethren, the Jewish Christians, who had nothing to receive from the alms of the Jews of the dispersion.

3. Here the elders are (ver. 30) abruptly mentioned, without any account of their coming into office. But we may suppose a proceeding similar to that which took place in the choice of the seven deacons at Jerusalem (chap. vi.). Doubtless the churches of Judea which had arisen beyond Jerusalem would especially re-

quire a social order and government; but also in the Holy City itself, in order to leave the apostles at liberty for their appropriate calling, the want of officers and rulers of the Church might have been felt. That in the apostolic times no essential distinction between πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι existed, requires here no express proof. It is not positively said that the elders, to whom Barnabas and Saul were sent, were at Jerusalem; we may suppose that they were also sent to the elders of other Christian churches in Judea. These received the gifts of Antioch in the name of their churches, but probably transmitted them to the deacons, in order to distribute the relief to individuals. A difficulty here arises, that Paul himself nowhere alludes to this journey for the relief of the Jewish Christians oppressed by famine; on the contrary, the narrative in Gal. i. and ii., where he seems completely to enumerate his visits to Jerusalem since his conversion, appears to exclude this particular visit (Meyer and Neander). De Wette, in order to reconcile this apparent discrepancy, has supposed that Paul went to Judea but not to Jerusalem, and that perhaps Barnabas alone travelled as far as the city; but most certainly a journey from Syria to the elders of the Jewish Church at Jerusalem, as the mother Church, was undertaken. The irreconcilability of this journey of Paul to Jerusalem with Gal. ii. 1 can only be maintained, when it is conceived that Paul in this epistolary passage designed to give a continuous and full enumeration of all his journeys to Jerusalem, for which, however, there is no convincing reason in that context.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Christian prophets here appear for the first time. As with the prophets of the Old Covenant, the prophecy of the future was not the exclusive or even the predominant matter, so the same holds good with the prophets of the New Covenant. The former were illuminated by God and divinely inspired speakers; so also were the latter. Not learned instruction and guidance into the comprehension of the truth (διδάσκειν, διδάσκαλοι), but the revelation of the counsel and will of God, seizing upon the conscience and the will, was the peculiar sphere of activity in which these men of God moved in the Old Covenant as well as in the New. According to ver. 28, only one of the many prophets

from Jerusalem prophesied at Antioch, and yet all, without doubt, laboured there as prophets. See chap. xiii. 1, προφῆται καὶ διδάσκαλοι.—The distinction between the prophets of the old and of the new economy consisted simply in this, that with the former, the law, and with the latter, redemption and reconciliation in Christ, was the given basis on which they stood with their knowledge and contemplation, and from which the peculiar illumination of the Spirit of God by which they spoke proceeded. But as in the Old Testament the addresses of the prophets, rebuking, exhorting, warning, and comforting, passed easily over to views of the future, particularly prophesying of Him who was to come; so the Holy Ghost, who illuminated and inspired the prophets of the Church of Christ, also cast rays of light upon the future, particularly in reference to the second coming of Him who once came, but will come again in the future to complete His kingdom. And doubtless, also, what Agabus prophesied of the famine over the whole earth was also connected with a discourse embracing the second coming of Christ and the judgment of the world, together with the signs of that coming.

2. The contribution of the church at Antioch for the churches of Judea oppressed with famine, is one of the fairest flowers in the garden of the apostolic era. There is manifested in this the intimate living fellowship between the churches, firmly founded on one and the same faith in the Redeemer Jesus Christ. In trouble, true friends are recognised; and in a famine, where many at Jerusalem perished of hunger (Joseph. Ant. xx. 2, 6), the true friendship and brotherly love of the Gentile Christians showed itself. They evidenced their love by their actions, and every man acted according to his ability. The church in Jerusalem had taken an interest in the converts in Syria, and had sent Barnabas to them as their teacher and the sharer in their joys. The Gentile Christians had to thank him, and through him the church in Jerusalem, for the strengthening and furtherance of their faith and Christian life, and also for bringing Saul to them; in short, the Christians at Antioch had enjoyed the active love of those at Jerusalem, chiefly in spiritual matters. Now they return love for love, but chiefly with temporal relief in the time of pressing famine and danger. But in all this, in this ebbing and flowing of unselfish and true love, the power of Him is manifested, in whom alone all souls are one, the Lord

Jesus Christ, who, with His love sacrificing Himself and reconciling sinners, is the blessed centre of the Church, and with His ministry (Matt. xx. 28) has planted such a ministry in the world, as without Him does not exist.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

Now they who were scattered, since the trouble, travelled (ver. 19). Persecution does not discourage a true Christian: bloody, yet inspiriting! (Starke).—Jerusalem was hitherto the nursery, where the Spirit of God reared the trees which were to be planted in other places, and to bring forth abundant fruit to the Lord (Apost. Past.).—There adhered indeed to those Christians, driven from Jerusalem, somewhat of weakness with their zeal, in that they spoke to the Jews only, but they did not injure the main thing. There is even more to praise than to blame: for, 1. They follow in this the command of Jesus, Luke xxiv. 47; and 2. It is an evidence of a beautiful love to their brethren according to the flesh, which the persecutions they suffered from the Jews were not able to quench.

And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene (ver. 20). How wonderful is the care of God for His Church! Already on the day of Pentecost men of Cyrene were witnesses, who could bring the Gospel to their countrymen better than native Jews. The Lord always knows to find the right labourers for His harvest (Apost. Past.).—Be silent, ye people craving after gifts, who deny to the Church its missionary call, unless it happen that it has men of apostolic gifts to send (Besser).

The hand of the Lord was with them (ver. 21). Therefore they require no arm of flesh. We work well, when the hand of the Lord works with us. But how often do we bind God's hands, when we do not handle the Gospel of the Lord faithfully enough! (Apost. Past.).—*A great number believed and turned to the Lord.* The only thing the true servant of Christ strives after, is to lead souls to the Lord, that the Lord and not he may receive them.

And they sent forth Barnabas (ver. 22). We find the believers in Jerusalem receive this, the second report of the conversion of the Gentiles, in a very different frame of mind from that in which they had received the first. Peter had then to sustain a storm of reproaches, because he went to the Gentiles;

but now, instead of being dissatisfied, they send forth Barnabas to further the work of the conversion of the Gentiles, now become dear and important to them. Thus the ways of God are gradually cleared up (Apost. Past.).—The mission from Jerusalem to Antioch had not as its object to subject this church to the former, or to form the one in every respect like unto the other; but to express their common joy at the gracious work of God, to communicate spiritual gifts, and to obviate temptations by suitable admonitions (Rieger).

Who, when he saw the grace of God, rejoiced (ver. 23). He did not judge the work by the persons who had laboured here, but by the grace which manifested itself. He deals in a true paternal manner with these beginners: he does not treat them as stepsons, although he himself had not begotten them by the word of truth. There are many taskmasters, but there are few fathers paternally disposed toward beginners in Christianity. The latter improve, the former injure (Apost. Past.).—*He exhorted them all with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord.* It is a precious thing when the heart is firm.—*On the blessing of stedfastness.* 1. It is good to be becoming a Christian. 2. It is better still to be a Christian. 3. Yet the Lord gives the highest praise on earth only to him who stedfastly remains a Christian, and continues the fight till victory. 4. Christ will yet reward such above with eternal crowns (Schmolke).

For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith (ver. 24). Behold here the qualities of a right teacher. He must, 1. be a good man—upright, unblameable in conduct: but this is not enough; such praise even a heathen may have. He must further be, 2. full of faith, rooted by faith in Christ: even this suffices not; this every Christian requires to be. The teacher must be, 3. full of the Spirit: only thereby does he become a right teacher, a shining light, a spring of salvation.—*And much people were added to the Lord.* No wonder so great a blessing. As the tree is, so is the fruit. What a noble gift of God a true bishop and minister is, a true Barnabas! Blessed is the church which has such shepherds, sound in the faith, holy in life, and endowed with the Spirit (Starke).

Then he departed to seek Saul (ver. 25). Barnabas found the net at Antioch so full, that he sought in Saul a companion to help him to draw it (Rieger.)—He thus gives a new proof of his

pure disposition. Had he an evil eye, and had he wished to make himself great in Antioch, he would have let Saul alone, who, he foresaw, would labour with greater approbation than himself. How rare has this method now-a-days become among teachers!—But Saul, that distinguished servant of the Lord, must first be sought. It is the manner of an hireling to hasten and to run unsought; but an upright mind which perceives the importance of the ministry withdraws itself, and remains gladly in the wilderness until called (Apost. Past.).

For a whole year, they assembled themselves with the church (ver. 26). It is here reckoned to the church a special blessing, that they could retain their teachers for a whole year. Now when churches are provided with fixed ministers, and one may hear the Gospel from youth to age, indeed, even on his death-bed, this blessing is lightly esteemed by most; yet such a continued proclamation of the Gospel is in the Old Covenant reckoned as a blessedness of the new dispensation, Isa. lxii. 6, 7 (Apost. Past.).—*And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.* It is worthy of remark, that the disciples are not named after Jesus the Saviour, but after Him as Christ the Anointed. They were not to be fellow-saviours with Him, but anointed with Him, receiving from Christ, the Head, their share of the gifts of the Spirit for general edification. Therefore John gives this as a test of believers: "Ye have the anointing," 1 John ii. 20 (Apost. Past.).—Thus we are to know that Christ was given and born for us, after whom we are called Christians as after our proper Captain and Prince. For we have and receive everything from Him: like as a man is called rich on account of his riches and treasures, or like as a woman who possesses the wealth of her husband, takes his name (Luther).—If our name be empty, then our guilt is heavy: *nomen inane, crimen immane* (Ambrose).—O God, give me only grace earnestly to endeavour to be a true Christian, and not merely to be called so. For whoever has not both the name and the reality, he never comes to Thy heavenly kingdom (Hasslocher: in the hymn, Thou say'st, I am a Christian).

One of them signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine (ver. 28). It is a great mercy that God does not surprise men with punishment, but warns them beforehand, in order that they may escape (Starke).

To send relief (ver. 29). True faith is ever active and strong by love, Gal. v. 6 (Starke).—With the forebodings of hard times, our first thoughts and our every endeavour ought not to be only so to take care that nothing be wanting to ourselves; but we must also have a regard to others in greater need than we. It often happens, as it did with the widow of Sarepta, who was first obliged to bestow her small provision upon the prophet Elijah, but afterwards was richly consoled by an abundant provision for herself and her son. He who has faith and love in his heart, will manifest them in action (Rieger).

Which also they did (ver. 30). We must strike while the iron is hot: before the good resolution cools, we must execute it (Starke).—*By the hands of Barnabas and Saul.* This is the old Christian ordinance: that ministers should have also an eye upon the poor in hospitals and alm-houses, so that the alms may be seasonably administered (Starke).

On the whole section.—What belongs to a successful work in spreading the kingdom of God. 1. Undaunted courage in opposition to the world (ver. 19). 2. Docile attention to the divine intimations (ver. 22). 3. Brotherly concord among the labourers in the word of the Lord (vers. 23–26).—*The blessedness of trouble for the Church of Christ.* 1. It separates those united, and thus serves for the spread of the kingdom (ver. 19: the Waldenses). 2. It unites those separated, and thus serves for the strengthening of faith and for the manifestation of love (vers. 29, 30: the Gastavus Adolphus Union).—*Concerning that help in trouble which proceeds from the consciousness of Christian fellowship.* 1. How it is distinguished from patriotic liberality. 2. How it always becomes a new bond for that fellowship, from which it proceeds (Schleiermacher).—*How the manifold gifts of Christians contribute to the general use.* 1. Those who are received as guests, give the Gospel as a present in return (vers. 19–21). 2. Those who possess the word in abundance, impart it to those who are in the first beginnings (vers. 22–28). 3. Those who are blessed with earthly wealth, assist those who have nothing (vers. 29, 30), (Lisco).—*Land plagues bring church blessings* (vers. 28–30). 1. They awake prophetic voices. 2. They teach us to attend to the word. 3. They produce works of love.—*The assistance of love and its blessing.* 1. In spiritual matters (vers. 22–24). 2. In temporal matters (vers. 28–30).—*Good*

deeds bear interest. 1. The good deed which proceeded from Jerusalem. 2. The interest which came back from Antioch.—*Barnabas at Antioch;* or, the minister of the Gospel as he should be. 1. Readily obedient to the leading of the Lord (ver. 22). 2. Kindly sympathizing with the wants of the Church (ver. 23). 3. Unblameably walking before the people (ver. 24). 4. Without envy associating with his brethren in the ministry (vers. 25, 26).—*Barnabas and Saul, a model of ministerial harmony.* 1. The sacrifice which it demands. 2. The blessing which it causes.—*Barnabas and Saul at Antioch; or, the blessed year of office.* 1. The grateful soil. 2. The delightful labour. 3. The abundant fruits.—*The sacred name of Christian* (ver. 26). 1. Its high dignity: it indicates, (*a*) one belonging to Christ, (*b*) one anointed by the Holy Spirit. 2. Its serious burden: it brings with it, (*a*) devotion to the service of Christ, (*b*) the shame of the world. —*Is the Christian name an honour or a mockery?* 1. An honour, notwithstanding all the mockery of the world, if we are what it indicates. 2. A mockery, notwithstanding all the honours which it includes, if we have nothing but the name.—*The Christian name of the primitive Church in its historical import.* It indicates: 1. The evident separation from the world to be a people of the Lord; 2. The decisive severance from the people of the Old Covenant to be a church of the New Testament; 3. The irrevocable incorporation to the Lord in the fellowship of His life, sufferings, and glory.—The little company of the Nazarenes become a nation of Christians; or, the grain of mustard-seed grows up into a tree.—*Christ all in all in His Church.* 1. The centre subject of preaching (ver. 20). 2. The light and power of believers (vers. 21, 23). 3. The model and example of ministers (vers. 24, 25). 4. The name and watchword of the Church (ver. 26).

SECTION V.

THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM BY HEROD, IN WHICH JAMES IS PUT TO DEATH, AND PETER, ON THE CONTRARY, ESCAPES, BY A MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE FROM PRISON AND BY WITHDRAWING FROM JERUSALEM, IS BROUGHT TO A CLOSE BY A DIVINE JUDGMENT ON THE PERSECUTOR.

CHAP. XII.

1 But about that time Herod the king took in hand to maltreat certain of the Church. 2 And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. 3 And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further, and seized also on Peter. Then were the days of unleavened bread. 4 And he apprehended him, and put him in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him, and intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people. 5 Now Peter was indeed kept in prison; but continued prayer was made by the Church unto God for him. 6 But when Herod was about to bring him forth, Peter slept the same night between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and likewise the guards before the door kept the prison. 7 And, behold, an angel of the Lord came to him, and a light shined in the room: and he smote Peter on the side and awoke him, and said, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell from his hands. 8 And the angel said to him, Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals: and he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy cloak about thee and follow me. 9 And he went forth and followed him: and knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. 10 But after they had passed through the first and second watch, they came to the iron gate which led to the city: this opened to them of its own accord; and they stepped out and went along a street, and suddenly the angel departed from him. 11 And Peter came to himself, and said, Now I certainly know that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the Jewish people. 12 And after he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, surnamed Mark, where many were assembled praying. 13 But as he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the door for joy, but ran in and told that Peter stood before the gate. 15 But they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she protested that it was so. Then said they, It is his angel. 16 But Peter stood and continued knocking. When they opened, they saw him, and were astonished. 17 But he beckoned to them with the hand to be silent, and related to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison; and said, Tell this to James and the brethren. And he went out of the city and repaired to another place. 18 But when it was

day, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. 19 But Herod, when he had sought for him, and had not been able to find him, sat in judgment on the guards, and commanded them to be executed. And he went down from Judea to Cæsarea, and tarried there. 20 And he was at violent enmity with the Tyrians and Sidonians: but they came with one accord to him, and gained over Blastus, the king's chamberlain, and sued for peace, because their country drew its food from the king's country. 21 But on a set day Herod put on his royal apparel, and sat upon his tribunal, and made an oration to them. 22 And the people cried out to him: It is the voice of God, and not of a man. 23 But immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and died thereof.

24 But the word of God grew and multiplied. 25 But Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, having fulfilled their ministry, and took also with them John, surnamed Mark.

Ver. 3. The article *αἱ* is awanting in the textus receptus, but is sufficiently attested.

Ver. 5. Ἐκτενής. Lachmann and Tischendorf, in their earlier editions, preferred *ἐκτενῶς*: however Tischendorf in his last edition returns to the adjective, which is indeed fully attested.—Περί is, on external and internal grounds, to be preferred to *ὑπέρ*, which appears to have been inserted as the more usual preposition.

Ver. 8. The simple verb *ζῶσαι* is at least as well attested as the compound verb *περίζωσαι*, and is preferred by Lachmann and Tischendorf, because the compound verb would be sooner inserted in place of the simple than the reverse.

Ver. 9. Αὐτῷ after *ἠκολούθει* is awanting in important MSS., and is regarded by Lachmann and Tischendorf as a later addition.

Ver. 13. Αὐτοῦ is sufficiently attested: *τοῦ Πέτρου* was inserted in its place, because at ver. 12 a church lesson commenced.

Ver. 23. The article *τήν* before *δόξαν* is indeed wanting in several old MSS.; but as the text is without the article in Luke xvii. 18, John ix. 24, Rom. iv. 20 (*δόξαν δοῦναι Θεῷ*), and in these places doubtful by no variation of reading, it is probable that the article, which is in A.B. and some others, is genuine. Tischendorf has therefore received it.

Ver. 25. Καί after *συμπαραλαβόντες* is indeed awanting in many Codd., but is probably genuine, as it would be sooner omitted as superfluous than added.

EXEGETICAL EXPLANATIONS.

1. *About that time:* that is, when Barnabas and Saul came from Antioch to Jerusalem; at least it is evident from ver. 25, that Luke places their return to Antioch after the execution of James, and the arrest and miraculous deliverance of Peter.

2. *Herod the king,* who is mentioned, is Herod Agrippa I.,

the son of Aristobulus and Bernice, the grandson of Herod the Great and the nephew of Herod Antipas. Born about the year 10 before Christ, and educated at Rome, after various adventures and many dishonourable occurrences, he received from Caius Caligula, soon after his accession to the throne, the tetrarchy of Philip (Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis), vacant for some years, and the tetrarchy of Lysanias, with the title of king. Soon afterwards he received also the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas (Galilee and Perea), when that king was banished by Caligula to Gaul. And lastly, the Emperor Claudius, at the commencement of his reign (41 A.D.), gave to him in addition, Samaria and Judea; so that he, as formerly his grandfather, ruled over all Palestine, and, according to Josephus (Ant. xix. 8, 2), had an income of twelve million drachms. See Ewald's History of the Apostolic Age.

3. This prince, after he had received Judea, resided chiefly in Jerusalem. The Christian Church there had now to suffer from him. He stretched forth violent and hostile hands (ἐπέβαλε τὰς χεῖρας, not ἐπεχείρησε, Kuinoel), so that he vexed certain of the Church. Thus, in the first instance, several members of the Church had to suffer severe punishment, probably corporeal correction. Afterwards he caused one of the apostles, James the Elder, the brother of John, to be executed with the sword. And soon after, as it appears, when he saw how well this was received by the Jews, he continued with similar measures, and arrested Peter. This happened in the Passover week, when, according to the Mosaic law, unleavened bread was eaten. Accordingly, the execution of James the Elder probably took place shortly before the Passover of the year 44, which date is determined by the death of Herod happening soon afterwards. Without doubt, not only the proceedings against Peter, but also the punishment of certain of the Church and the execution of James, proceeded from a regard to the people and their ringleaders. The self-confidence of the Jewish people and of their hierarchical chiefs had been again raised by means of the great imperial favour toward Agrippa, and his increased power and honour. And as Agrippa, notwithstanding his predilection for heathen games, musical festivals, and gladiatorial combats, yet, externally at least, observed the Mosaic statutes, and powerfully defended and protected the Jewish religion against others; so it

is conceivable that the fanatical susceptibility and intolerant arrogance of Israel against the Christians, who were gradually recovering from the earlier persecution, increased under his government (see Ewald). Agrippa yielded to this spirit of the time, so much the more willingly, the more evident it was to him that by forcible measures against the Christians he could establish himself more firmly in the popular favour, and thus at the expense of the Christians could provide for his own interests. To sail safely between all parties, and to make the most of circumstances for his own selfish interests, was an art in which he, years ago, chiefly at Rome, had acquired great skill.

4. *He killed James.*—It is, under all circumstances, remarkable that Luke narrates the execution of James so very briefly, only with two words, *ἀνεῖλε—μαχαίρᾳ*. He has fully related to us the martyrdom of Stephen step by step; and yet he was only one of the seven. But now, when for the first time one of the Twelve dies a bloody death, the only apostle whose death is recorded in the Acts, it is related with laconic brevity. Tradition completes what is here apparently awanting: we are told that the accuser of James was converted by his defence, and beheaded along with him (Clement Alex. in Eusebius' Church History ii. 9). But how is this remarkable brevity to be explained? Is it designed or involuntary? It has been said that Luke, in order to remain true to his plan, and to give a history of the development of the Church, passed over the death of the apostle (Lekebusch); but to add a few additional words would have very well coincided with that plan. Baumgarten thinks that Luke has related it precisely as it took place; that James was silent, and suffered the bloody death entirely as an ordinary man. But Baumgarten himself describes the circumstances somewhat in detail; and if so, Luke would have arrived still more closely at the reality, if he also had related it in detail. Meyer supposes that some consideration unknown to us, perhaps that Luke intended to compose a third history, was the reason. But nothing positive can be affirmed concerning it; and the most candid course is simply to admit that the reason does not appear.

5. *And when he saw.*—After James was slain, and Agrippa had observed how this pleased the people, he forthwith seized upon Peter (the strong Hebraism *προσέθετο συλλαβεῖν* presup-

poses a Hebrew narrative of the event), he apprehended him (πιέζω, *stricta manu tenere*), and put him in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard; that is, four companies of four men each, regularly relieving each other, according to the Roman custom. For not until after the Passover week, which had already begun, could Peter be judged in conformity with the Jewish custom: *non judicant die festo.* Agrippa intended this as a spectacle for the people (*ἀνάγειν* is used for a person being led upon a high stage before the public), for spectacles were favourite amusements of the king.

6. *Now Peter was kept in prison.*—Ver. 5 places before us the contrast between the unintermitting guard over the apostle and the continued prayer of the Church for him. This observation stands strikingly between the imprisonment and the deliverance of Peter. Luke would evidently give us to understand by this, that the rescue of the apostle from prison and impending death was the effect of prayer being heard.

7. *But when Herod.*—On the night before the day on which he was to be led forth before the people, Peter slept between two soldiers, being fastened with a chain to each, whereas the Romans were accustomed to chain their prisoners only to one sentry (Joseph. Ant. xviii. 6, 7). Whilst therefore within the prison two soldiers were fastened to the prisoner, the other guards were before the door, so that four constituted the watch at the same time. Suddenly an angel (not the angel) of the Lord stood beside the sleeper, and a heavenly light shone in the room (*ἐν τῷ οἰκήματι*, in the apartment or cell of the prison, where Peter was; not the whole prison is meant: Meyer). The angel awoke him with a blow on the side, whereupon his chains fell from his hands. The angel then commanded him to dress himself, to put on his girdle, sandals, and upper garments, articles of clothing which he had thrown off to sleep more comfortably. Then he enjoined him to follow; and Peter going after the angel went out of his cell, without being conscious that it was a reality, but appearing to him like a dream. Then they went through the first and second watch (*διελθεῖν* suggests the idea, that each watch consisted not of one man, but of several, so that they could go through between them). At length they came to the iron gate which led out of the whole building into the city. This opened to them of its own accord, without requiring to be un-

locked or broken up, so that they stepped into the open air, and went along a street together. But now the angel vanished suddenly from the side of the apostle. *Ἀπέστη* (ver. 10) is parallel to *ἐπέστη* (ver. 7); both words expressing the suddenness of the appearance and disappearance.

8. *And suddenly the angel departed from him.*—Hitherto it was to Peter as if he dreamed. Not until now, when he found himself standing alone in the city, did clear and full consciousness return to him (*γενόμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ*), and he said, Now I know of a truth, so that I am certain that I am not deceived, that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me out of the power of Herod and from the eager expectation of the Jews, which shall not be fulfilled. Peter thus, as soon as he became conscious, gladly and gratefully perceived both the author and the design of what had happened to him: It is the Lord my God who has sent His angel to me, and has rescued me from the power of Herod, who designed my death, and from the expectation of the Jews.—It is exactly the opposite of this view of Peter, which Luke from his whole narrative gives us to understand as the correct one, to represent the deliverance as a natural event, namely, that a flash of lightning loosed his chains (Hezel); or that the jailor himself, or others with his knowledge, delivered Peter, without his being conscious how it happened (Heinrichs). The event is, in point of fact, so plainly related, and contains for him who believes in the interpositions of the living God, and the real existence and operations of the angels, so little that is disturbing, that it is incomprehensible how any one, who recognises the purely historical facts of the case as miraculous, can yet maintain that there is here a mixture of the myth with pure history (Meyer); for, ver. 9, *οὐκ ᾔδει—ὅραμα βλέπειν* is psychologically so true, that no support can be gained from it to transfer the whole angelic appearance exclusively to the imagination of Peter.

9. *And after he had considered this* (*συνιδών* from *συνοραν* not = *συνειδως*, as Kuinoel appears to take it; rather the use of the word entitles us to employ the meaning *considerare: re apud se considerata, scil. quid agendum esset*), he came to the house of a member of the Church, which belonged to Mary, the mother of John called Mark, who went with Barnabas and Saul from Jerusalem to Antioch (ver. 25), and who, according to

tradition, is the author of the second Gospel. In this house many Christians were assembled praying, for, according to ver. 5, the Church since Peter's arrest engaged in constant prayer for him. Peter knocked at the door of the gate, and a maid-servant named Rhoda came to hearken (*ὑπακοῦσαι*), that is, to inquire the name of the person who stood outside; and when she recognised Peter by his voice, she forgot from joy to do what was most obvious, namely, to open the door, but ran in hastily, in order to bring the news to the Christians assembled in an inner room, that Peter stood before the gate. It is a touching sign of genuine brotherly equality between masters and servants in the primitive Church, that this servant, who was without doubt also a Christian, was so affected with joy at the appearance of the apostle, that she forgot what lay nearest at hand, in order to make all likewise the partakers of her joy. It is easy to understand that the assembled Christians would be in doubt whether she were in her senses, when she maintained that Peter stood before the door; but it is less clear what they mean, when, on the asseverations of the damsel that it was even so, they said *ὁ ἄγγελος αὐτοῦ ἐστίν*. That they meant, it is a messenger from Peter whom he had sent, is incredible; for how could they imagine that the apostle should have sent a messenger out of prison, whose voice moreover had a deceptive resemblance to that of Peter? Also the supposition has nothing in its favour, that the Christians suppose that an angel by a voice and knocking would announce the directly approaching death of the apostle; in other words, that it was a so-called presentiment. It seems most probable that they believed that Peter's guardian angel had adopted his voice, and stood before the door. But when Peter stood and knocked as before, all the assembled brethren came to open it, and to convince themselves how the matter stood; and when they actually saw him, they were filled with amazement.

10. *But he beckoned to them with his hand to be silent.*—*Κατασείσαι τῇ χειρί*, with an up-and-down motion of the hand. He was afraid lest the astonishment of the brethren might express itself so loudly that his safety would be endangered. He forthwith related to them the circumstances of his deliverance, directly effected by God, and enjoined them to inform James and the rest of the brethren: he then, without delay, left the city that night, and departed to another place. Whither?

That, one seeks in vain to discover. The Roman theologians naturally think on Rome; but it does not appear that Luke himself knew. Meyer imagines that it is a mistake to seek the ἕτερος τόπος outside of Jerusalem; for ἐξελθών, according to the context, cannot mean *relicta urbe*, but *relicta domo*. But it is nowhere said in the context that Peter entered the house: the words leave it as possible, that when the door was opened, he related quickly to them on the spot with all brevity, and gave the necessary injunctions, without entering inside. And although we were to suppose that he did enter, yet the whole circumstances of the case lead to the supposition that the apostle directly left the city. For he could not suppose that God had brought him out of prison with the design that he should continue to reside in that city where his life was threatened: and it was more dignified to repair to another place, when at liberty, than to conceal himself in a hiding-place within the city. The James here mentioned (ver. 17) is, according to our opinion, not the apostle the son of Alpheus, but the brother of the Lord.

11. *When it was day.*—It is easy to imagine that the soldiers, who had been commanded to guard the prisoner, and were answerable for his person, would be not a little disturbed when it was day, as to what had become of Peter. And when all searching after him led to no result (ἐπιζητεῖν is used of tracking out in the chase), Herod ordered the soldiers who were then on guard to be tried before a military tribunal (ἀνακρίνας), and executed (ἀπάγειν, the judicial *terminus* of the leading off to execution). But after this he would remain no longer on the spot: he was ashamed not to be able to fulfil the expectation with regard to Peter, and departed forthwith from Judea to Cæsarea Palestinea, where he took up his residence.

12. *He was at violent enmity.*—Luke relates the death of Herod Agrippa, following soon afterwards, with its more minute circumstances, evidently regarding it as a divine judgment on account of his sin against Christ and His apostles. He mentions the first attack of the illness of Agrippa, in connection with a public and solemn audience granted to the Phenicians. Herod was θυμομαχῶν with those of Tyre and Sidon. The word occurs only in the later classics, in Polybius, Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and, as it appears, always in the sense of external and

even fierce war and fighting (Steph. Thes.). But as an actual campaign of Agrippa against the Phenician cities, likewise in alliance with Rome, is in itself improbable and entirely unknown, we are obliged to take the word in the sense that Herod was embittered (*θυμο-*) against the Tyrians and Sidonians, and made war upon them (*-μαχῶν*), as well as he could, perhaps closing up the frontiers against them, to which what follows points. These now came to him with one accord, by delegates from both cities, who repaired to the residence of Agrippa, and desired peace, because their country derived its supply of food from the king's country, inasmuch as the Phenicians obtained corn from Palestine, and also because their exportation to Palestine was advantageous. In order to reach their object the more certainly, they sought to gain over Blastus, an officer high in rank in the court of Agrippa (*ὁ ἐπὶ τοῦ κοιτῶνος*),—not indeed *præfectus cubiculi* in the original sense of the term, but treasurer, finance minister of the king, because the court and state treasures were usually placed for security in a secret cabinet. Accordingly, Herod, on an appointed day, gave a public audience to the ambassadors, at which he in full state, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon the tribunal (*βῆμα*, not throne, but *suggestus*, tribunal for judges or orators at public assemblies), and made an oration to the assembly. Then the people, applauding with heathen flattery, shouted, It is the voice of God, and not of a man! And immediately an angel of God smote him, because he had in silence received this idolatrous adulation, and had not given the glory rendered to him to God, to whom alone it belonged. The sudden attack which befell the king is represented as sent not only as a divine punishment, but also by means of an invisible messenger of God, an angel of the Lord. In consequence of this sudden attack of sickness, Agrippa was eaten of worms, and died thereof. But does Luke describe the death as occurring on the spot? If the three words *καὶ γενόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος* stood not there, ver. 23 could not be otherwise understood. But the above words give us to understand that there was an interval between *ἐπάταξεν* and *'ξέψυξεν*, in which the worms in the bowels performed their horrible work.

13. With this account of Luke (vers. 20–23) let us compare the narrative of Josephus of the end of Herod Agrippa (Ant. xix. 8, 2). According to this authority, Agrippa was at Cæsarea,

and there exhibited games in honour of Cæsar (Claudius), at which he assembled a multitude of his officers and principal men. On the second day of the games, he put on a splendid garment made of silver and of a wonderful contexture, and came into the theatre at break of day. When the first rays of the sun fell upon the silver, and this shone in a dazzling manner, the flatterers broke out from various quarters with the idolatrous shout: "Be gracious to us;" and "We have hitherto reverenced thee as a man, but now we confess that thou art exalted above mortal nature." The king did not decline this profane flattery. Soon after he looks up, and sees an owl sitting on a rope extended above his head; and he recognises in it, according to a prediction imparted to him at an earlier period, a messenger of evil tidings, and immediately he experiences the deepest sorrow along with severe pains in his bowels. Forthwith he expressed himself to his friends that he must now die, whereas they had even now called him immortal; and that he must submit to the inevitable destiny of God, yet that he had lived in a splendid and happy manner. Meanwhile the pain rose to a violent pitch, on which account he was quickly carried into the palace; and after five days of painful suffering in his bowels, he expired in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

The narrative of Josephus agrees with the much shorter account of Luke in the following points:—1. The sudden sickness and death of Agrippa happened at Cæsarea, where he had shortly before arrived. 2. The time of the first attack of sickness was the public appearance of the king at a festive assembly, at which he wore a royal robe of state. 3. Directly before the first attack of this deadly malady, flattering and idolatrous shouts in honour of the king resounded, which he did not reject, but received in silence. 4. Hereupon a disease in the bowels attacked him suddenly, in consequence of which he shortly afterwards died.

The two accounts, on the other hand, differ in the following points:—1. Josephus knows nothing of the embassy of the Phenician cities, requesting peace and friendly intercourse, to which Agrippa gave a public audience; and nothing of the speech of the king to which the idolatrous shout of those present referred. This can only appear as an objection to him who supposes that Josephus had a perfect knowledge of all the events

of that time, and their connection; whilst the statement of Luke, considered in itself, contains nothing in the least degree improbable. Besides, the flattering shouts appear much more accountable, if we, according to our passage, conceive that a public speech of Agrippa preceded, than if, according to Josephus, we suppose that the dazzling lustre of his robe (which Luke also notices) was the sole occasion of them. 2. On the other hand, Luke entirely omits the owl (that genuine heathen and superstitious trait) which appeared as the foreboding of death, and the sight of which greatly terrified the king, as he recollected the soothsaying words of a German, who formerly at Rome had indicated the owl as the messenger of good tidings, but that, if it appeared again, as the messenger of death (Ant. xviii. 6, 7). Instead of this, Luke relates only the stroke which the king suffered by an invisible angel of the Lord, and with which his sickness commenced. Eusebius (Church Hist. ii. 10), who otherwise entirely follows the narrative of Josephus, seeks to reconcile our passage with it by putting the angel whom the king saw in the place of the owl; an unfortunate attempt at reconciliation, whereas the miraculous punishment by the angel corresponds exactly with the miraculous deliverance of Peter, threatened by Herod, by an angel. 3. The kind of sickness itself—concerning whose seat, the bowels, both sources agree—is so far differently described, that Josephus only knows of severe and excruciating pains, but Luke speaks more definitely of worms (not of lice, φθειρίασις); both of which accounts may very well agree. Whilst our passage is more precise in regard to the nature of the disease, Josephus more exactly determines its duration, namely, five days; which also is compatible with the words of Luke.

Accordingly, both accounts fully agree in the most essential features, and complete each other; whilst in the points of difference Luke merits the preference.

14. *But the word of God grew.*—In ver. 24 the history returns to the Church of Christ, with which vers. 19–23 were only indirectly concerned. Moreover, the remark that the word of God multiplied (namely, by the increase of those who received it) appears to be connected with the death of the persecutor Agrippa: after this prince by a divine punishment was deprived of life, the Gospel made the more rapid progress. Barnabas and Saul now returned from Jerusalem (which in chap. xi. 29

was not expressly named as the end of their journey) to Antioch, which is now to be regarded as their settled post, after they had fulfilled the ministry entrusted to them. They also took with them to Antioch an additional assistant for their work in the person of John, surnamed Mark, already mentioned in connection with his mother. The place which this notice concerning Barnabas and Saul occupies, compared with chap. xi. 30, gives us to understand, that in the interval between their departure and return to Antioch, the events of chap. xii.—namely, the execution of James, the imprisonment and deliverance of Peter, and the death of Herod Agrippa—occurred, so that Barnabas and Saul, perhaps, only after the departure of Agrippa and his death, arrived at Jerusalem. We have here a sure chronological date, inasmuch as it is evident from Josephus, Ant. xix. 8, 2, compared with vers. 21–23, that Herod must have died in the year 44, and indeed soon after the Passover of that year.

DOGMATICAL AND ETHICAL THOUGHTS.

1. Let the reasons why Luke has related so concisely the death of James be what they may, yet it is certain that the Holy Ghost, by whose inspiration this history was written, has in this very brevity evinced a peculiar wisdom. Of the martyrdom of Stephen, a complete account is transmitted to us; of the martyrdom of James, one as surprisingly short, notwithstanding that he was one of the twelve, yea, one of the three favoured apostles of Jesus, the first of the chosen twelve who glorified the Redeemer with his death. However eager we may be to learn more precisely how it took place, when one of the sons of Zebedee drunk the cup which His Lord had first drank, and was baptized with the bloody baptism which He had promised to him, yet our expectation is completely disappointed. This sacred silence is to us a sign, that what is highest and most pleasing before God, is not precisely that of which men, even the righteous and believers, know how to speak and talk much; but that our life is hid with Christ in God (Col. iii. 3). That which is the real life in life, and that which is the holiest death in death is hid with Christ in God, concealed not only from the world, but sometimes also from the children of God; and yet it is precious before God, yea, a work which follows after the soul in eternity (Rev. xiv. 13).

2. This deliverance of Peter out of prison is one of the most remarkable instances of answer to prayer. There were, so to speak, two powers wrestling with each other: the power of the world will hold fast the apostle and put him to death; the Church of Christ will rescue him, and preserve his liberty and life. The world has all material instruments at its disposal—prisons, chains and fetters, soldiers and weapons: the Church has none of these, but instead of them, prayer—united and continued prayer. Faith in God in Christ, love to each other for Christ's sake, Christian hope,—the entire inward life proceeding from redemption is concentrated in prayer; and prayer by faith lays hold on the omnipotence of God. Such united prayer in the name of Jesus Christ is heard; this prevails more than all the power of the world.

3. This twelfth chapter reveals to us more about the angels than any other chapter in the Acts of the Apostles. An angel of God appears in the prison, awakens the apostle and leads him out, delivers him from prison and rescues him from directly impending death. When Peter appears before a friendly house, and believers were informed of it, they thought that it must be his angel. Lastly, it is an angel who smites Herod, whilst he stands on the pinnacle of success and glory, so that he must shortly die. The first and the third in a certain manner belong together: both are here related as matters of fact; both times the angels are the servants and instruments of the holy and righteous providence and government of Almighty God. God interposes both times in the course of things, sending an angel to execute His commands, first as a ministering spirit to one who is an heir of salvation, and afterwards to execute righteous punishment on a blasphemer who tormented and slew the children of God. The word of God lets us look into the concealed machinery of the divine government, whereof we see nothing with our eyes, as in ver. 23 the angel was invisible, and in ver. 11 Peter, only after the angel had departed from him, came to himself, and knew that the Lord had sent His angel to deliver him. The mention of the angel in ver. 15 is of an entirely different nature. Here only the Christians, who could not yet believe that Peter himself stood in the body before the house, say, It is his angel. They in fact erred; it was himself. This is sufficient to oblige us to relinquish the idea that an article of faith can be

established on this expression. In particular, the belief in guardian angels, who are appointed to individual persons, has from this passage but a weak support.

4. These events are an evident proof that Christ, as Lord and King, increases and protects His Church, though hell may rage. Herod Agrippa, the grandson, resembling his grandfather, Herod the Great, and the heir of his whole kingdom, finds pleasure in tormenting the Christians, indeed, puts the Apostle James to death; and, for the sake of the popular favour which he thus acquires, he thinks to do the same with Peter: he puts him in prison, and commands him to be guarded carefully according to the Roman method. The Jewish people rejoice, and hope with eager expectation for a scene which shall give full satisfaction to their fanatical passions. For the first time in the apostolic age are the civil authority of the country and the people of Israel, together with their hierarchical rulers, united against the Church of Christ. At an earlier period the hierarchy stood alone, and afterwards it stood united with the people, artificially stirred up against the servants of Jesus Christ. Now with the people decidedly hostile, Herod, concentrating in himself all the political power under the Roman authority, is united. Reason enough for the worst fears. But Christ is always with His people, and to Him is committed all power in heaven and in earth. He miraculously protects His Church at the request of believers, rescuing Peter by an angel, so that not only the expectation of the people is disappointed, but the military power is dismayed, and Herod most grievously put to shame: he takes vengeance on the innocent guards, and leaves the city where his honour had been so deeply wounded. But in Cæsarea, where his glory reaches to the highest imaginable pitch, and flatterers even deify him, at that instant, and even on the pinnacle of his glory, the blow of the angel smites him, and in consequence he dies. The power of the world, which raises itself against God and Christ, suffers the most ignominious overthrow; whilst, on the other hand, the Gospel and the Church of Christ increase with might. Christ is King; and as yesterday, so to-day and for ever, is the increaser of His kingdom, and the gates of hell will not prevail against His Church.

HOMILETICAL HINTS.

To this chapter we might adopt Prov. x. 25 as a title: "The ungodly is as a storm which passes away and is no more; but the righteous shall stand for ever:" or, "The righteous man is as a pillar of the world, and has, in the design of God, such mighty destinies, for the sake of which his quiet and insignificant actions are of much more consequence than the stormy, destructive, but often quickly passing noise of the wicked." Herod, a passing storm with its last outbreaks: Peter and James, ever stedfast pillars, taken in connection with the growth of the word of God, arising from their sufferings (Rieger).—This whole chapter places before our eyes a glorious sketch of the miraculous and blessed government of God in His Church. Here is seen a church persecuted, and yet increasing under sufferings. Two noble servants of Jesus, of whom the one is delivered up to the sword of the enemy, but the other miraculously rescued. A raging enemy, who was as severe and cruel in his persecutions, as he was contemptible and miserable by the judgments of God inflicted upon him. Whoever contemplates this display of Divine Providence with the eye of faith, must necessarily receive courage and joyfulness to submit himself patiently to the ways of eternal love, certain of a blessed issue of the trials of the Lord, apparently so dark (Apost. Past.).

About this time (ver. 1). Trouble seldom comes alone: at first famine, now persecution (Starke).—As with the weather in April, now the sun shines, now it rains and snows; so is it often with the Church. The sun shone, when believers were called Christians at Antioch: then a black cloud came, when Herod persecuted the Church (Starke).—*Herod the king stretched forth his hand.* The conversion of emperors and kings could not sooner be attained than by the prayer and blood of the martyrs of three centuries (Quesnel).—The family of Herod, no less than the family of Saul, might be called a bloody house, and the Herods bloody men. The grandfather, at the birth of Christ, bathed the children of Bethlehem in blood; the uncle caused John the Baptist to be beheaded; and the grandson stained himself with the blood of James, and would willingly have gone further (Rieger).

He beheaded James (ver. 2). Thus James obtained what

he once asked of Christ, Matt. xx. 20. Although the Scriptures speak briefly of his bloody death, yet precisely by this simple account a precious testimony of quiet and patient suffering is given to James, which demonstrates the completest self-renunciation and the most voluntary submission (Leonh. and Spieg.). —Though the death of His saints is precious before the Lord, yet the Scriptures make few words of it, and by this distinguish the meritorious sufferings and atoning death of Jesus, who is the only fountain of life, from similar occurrences (Rieger).—*James' noble end:* or, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." 1. Before man, indeed, a sad and melancholy death. (*a*) Bloody and cruel: the noble head of the apostle falls under the sword of the executioner. (*b*) Premature and sudden: he must quit this earthly scene before he has effected anything important in his apostolic calling. (*c*) Without glory, and quiet: he departs uncelebrated by the world, unpraised even by the word of God. 2. Before God a noble end and a beautiful death. (*a*) He had fulfilled his vocation here below: not how long, but how we live, is the chief matter. (*b*) He dies in the service of his Lord, and preaches as powerfully by his death, as his fellow-apostles do by their word. (See the tradition mentioned above of Clement of Alexandria.) (*c*) He hastens toward his heavenly destination, whilst he as the first among the brethren receives the martyr's crown, and is honoured by sitting at the right hand of Christ, which in his youthful enthusiasm he formerly asked.—*The quiet disciples of the Lord, how they yet bear testimony for Him.* 1. Though not by shining gifts, yet by the meek and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God. 2. Though not by mighty deeds, yet by patient suffering and holy dying. 3. Though not in the annals of the world's history, yet in the brotherly circles of the children of God.—*The happy lot of the early dead.* 1. Quickly ripened for a higher life. 2. Soon removed from the sorrows of the world. 3. Lovingly embalmed in the memory of their friends.—*The wishes of youth and the experiences of life.* How the former by the latter are, 1. often painfully disappointed; but, 2. beneficially purified; and thus, 3. blessedly fulfilled. Reference to the example of James, according to Matt. xx. 20 and Acts xii. 2.

And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded

(ver. 3). Herod, who formerly did many things in opposition to the people, was fickle enough here, at the expense of Christianity, to do for once something to please them. How much of that sort of fickleness is there still in the world! how many things do we to please others, in order to have them do the like for our pleasure! (Rieger).—*Then were the days of unleavened bread.* This very time must strengthen Peter in patience, in fidelity, and in confession, by the remembrance not only of his former denial, but especially of the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus. Whoever carries his cross after the Lord, his days of suffering are converted, as those of the Lord, into days of triumph; for if we are in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection and glory (Leonh. and Spieg.).—Now Peter, and the Church with him, is thus brought into that "Hereafter," concerning which it was said unto him, "Thou shalt follow Me hereafter" (Rieger).

Delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him (ver. 4). The great strictness with which Peter is watched is, on the one hand, a proof of the evil conscience and the furious rage of the enemies of Christ, and, on the other hand, a testimony of the respectable character which the servants of Jesus, even in their deepest sufferings, retain. They are terrible to the devil and his followers, even when they seem to be most in his power (Apost. Past.).—*Intending after the Passover to bring him forth unto the people.* To make plans and determinations, that God indeed allows unto the enemies of His kingdom; but the performance of these plans is under His blessed government. Herod intended to murder Peter, but the Lord intended to save Peter and to kill Herod (Apost. Past.).

Peter was indeed kept in prison, but prayer was made (ver. 5). *But.* Now, Herod, make all thy preparations, they will avail thee nothing. Opposed to thee stands a powerful "but;" against it, thou prosperest not. What is this "but"? Apparently less than nothing. Mere prayers! But a single word of prayer can overwhelm all the power of hell; and wherefore not then Herod with his sixteen soldiers? (Williger).—God can refuse nothing to a praying church (Chrysostom).—By the blood and prayers of Christians, Herod's arm is paralysed, his sceptre broken, yea, the Roman empire has crumbled into pieces.—Brotherly love is mindful of the imprisoned: never let true prayer for the bound

and the oppressed, as well as for the fighting warriors in the holy contest, cease with us (Leonh. and Spieg.).

The same night Peter slept between two soldiers (ver. 6). See here the festival of St Peter's imprisonment (Besser).—Extreme need is the element of the most living faith and the triumph of the truest and mightiest love. The most living faith in the promises of God is that which is most fire-proof; which does not show itself without the fire of extreme need. And the truest love in heaven, which could remove all suffering from its people, allows many sufferings to get to the worst, not only to destroy in the world the foolish idea of chance, but also to allow the sufferer himself, when he with many precious experiences comes forth from his long protracted suffering, to enjoy a fruit of peace which is sweeter than all that the world has, and in order to seal it to him for his whole life, that we have a God who helps, and that the Lord, He is the Lord who delivers from death (Menken).—*Peter in prison sleeping between two soldiers:* a beautiful picture, 1. Of Christian faith, which in a prison and in the horrors of death lies sleeping like a child in the bosom of God; 2. Of divine love, which stands with its eyes open over its sleeping and bound children day and night.

And, behold, an angel of the Lord (ver. 7). The angels are the faithful ministers of Christ and the companions of His servants. With James, they were employed to convey his soul to glory. With Peter, they were instruments to deliver him from his bonds. But Herod experienced the hand of the angel to his destruction (Apost. Past.).—The servants of God have to recognise a sovereign Lord over them, who has power to decree to them death or life, sufferings or peace. The Lord suffers James to be killed. When it came to Peter's turn, He performs a miracle, and sends off an angel to rescue him. It is one of the greatest mysteries of Providence, that God takes away early many of His faithful servants, and causes many to come through the severest sufferings. He preserves others, and permits not sufferings to oppress them. It concerns us humbly to submit ourselves to the Lord that He may lead us, and not to judge our fellow-servants. We have all one Lord and one jewel, but have not all the same lot and the same guidance. Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord (The same).—*And a light shone in the room.* To the

upright there ariseth light out of darkness from Him who is gracious, compassionate, and righteous, Ps. cxii. 4 (Starke).—How many dark chambers of suffering have thus been lit up, now with inward consolations which disclose heaven to the heart, and now by external aid! And how often is a messenger of heaven round about us also, as he came to Peter! Assuredly if the eye of the soul were opened, we would very often see a form of light in our neighbourhood, and thus would throw away all cares and fears concerning our oppressing burdens. But though we see nothing around us, because we have at present to walk by faith and not by sight, yet we know that even now the angels are ministering spirits of eternal love, and are sent forth to minister unto those who shall be the heirs of salvation; so that we may comfort ourselves with David: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom shall I be afraid? The Lord is the strength of my life, at whom shall I be dismayed?" (Kapff).—*And he said, Arise up quickly; and his chains fell from his hands.* Thus no iron is too firm, no stone too hard, no bar too strong, for the word of the Lord. But certainly, if a preacher will prove the strength of the divine word on a hard heart, he must also act as an angel, as a messenger of God, not with the chaff of human wisdom, but in the name of Jesus, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (Apost. Past.).

And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself (ver. 8). It suffices not the angel to rescue the person of the apostle. He faithfully and carefully condescends to every want of the sleeping Peter. First he awakens him, then he speaks to him, as a mother who dresses her sleepy child. Girdle, shoes, cloak—things which to an angel might be trifling—he hands them to him as it were, and helps him to put them on (Kapff).—Nothing of his effects shall be left behind in the hands of the enemy, that his departure may not be like the flight of a criminal. "Not a hoof shall be left behind," Exod. x. 26. This may greatly comfort a true servant of Jesus. He may be assured that the world and Satan, without the will of his Father, cannot seize upon a thread of his, a hair of his head, or a latchet of his shoes. O faithful Saviour, a watchful guardian of His friends! How must this redound to the terror of Herod and his guards, that with all their strength they could not even carry off a rag of Peter! (Apost. Past.).

But thought he saw a vision (ver. 9). The Lord led Peter as

one who dreamed out of the greatest danger. Even now this is often the case with His people, by sudden help and wonderful deliverance out of severe trouble: as David says, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream."—The Lord causes us to partake of this favour especially at the last contest, and leads us joyfully out of the prison of this tabernacle into eternity, as here He delivered Peter from his bonds (Apost. Past.).

When they were past the first and second watch (ver. 10). Then were fulfilled the words of Isaiah: "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron," Isa. xlv. 2 (Starke).—*They came to the iron gate which leadeth into the city.* Peter is led out of prison, but yet again into the city: 1. In order that his faith may remain in exercise: although a battle be well fought, that is not all. 2. In order that his deliverance be known to the Church, and thus be to the strengthening of the faith of many (Apost. Past.).—*And suddenly the angel departed from him.* Extraordinary things last only so long as they are necessary (Starke).

Now I know of a truth that God hath sent His angel (ver. 11). Whoever looks back upon the way which the Lord has led him, is filled with wonder and praise at that which, before he came to the end, he did not understand (Quesnel).—Thus God will be recognised as our help in trouble, in order that all human praise may sink, and the glory remain to Him alone (Starke).

And when he had considered this, he came to the house, where many were gathered together praying (ver. 12). All things coincide in the kingdom of Jesus: Peter, to his delight, is led out of prison, and from the companionship of rough soldiers to a little company of praying brethren. And they, the sorrowful believers, for the strengthening of their faith, and as a blessed proof that the prayer of the righteous, when earnest, availeth much, see suddenly in the midst of them Peter, whom they had already believed to be lost.—But were not these concealed assemblies secret conventicles? Thus the world then called them, and so it calls them still. But yet these remain blessed little churches, where the worshippers of God assemble together in spirit and in truth (Gossner).—Moreover, where there is not

trouble and persecution, religious assemblies are to be held, as much as possible, in the day-time (Starke).

A damsel named Rhoda (ver. 13). How many great titles and dignities shall one day be concealed in the dust! How many names which make a parade in the world will sink into eternal forgetfulness, yea, into dishonour! But, on the other hand, the lightly esteemed and, by the world, scarcely known names of the true followers of Jesus, of those who give unto His people only a cup of cold water, will be crowned with eternal honour (Apost. Past.).

And they said unto her, Thou art mad (ver. 15). They prayed for the deliverance of Peter, but this manner of deliverance was to them unexpected and incredible (Rieger).—So it always happens with believing petitioners. There is always something of the leaven of unbelief mixed with their faith, so that it must ever be said, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (Williger).

He beckoned to them (ver. 17). Peter, after his deliverance, was, in the first place, intent on the glory of God. Accordingly he relates not only that the Lord had delivered him, but how He had done so. If we would be useful to others with the grace which has happened to us, we must make very clear to them the way by which the Lord has led us. Unconverted teachers always remain with the ὅτι, but are silent about the πῶς, because they themselves have never trod the paths of conversion (Apost. Past.).—*And he went into another place.* The Lord took from the Church its Peter, precisely at the most critical time, to teach it to stand without him. Just because the Church again possessed him in a miraculous manner, it would perhaps soonest yield to the danger of regarding him as indispensable (Williger).—There must first be manifested as many proofs of fidelity and stedfastness as Peter showed, before we will be called to imitate him in his flight (Apost. Past.).—The mission of the twelve apostles to the twelve tribes had now reached its end. "For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." Peter knows by the Holy Ghost that the remaining ten apostles have received the signal

of departure from Jerusalem as well as he; therefore he directs those assembled, not to an apostle, but to James, the Lord's brother, who among those formerly wisely appointed elders occupied the first place (Besser).

But when it was day, there was no small commotion (ver. 18). When the world rejoices, the servants of Jesus mourn; but when the disciples of Christ rejoice, His enemies sit in sorrow (Apost. Past.).—*Among the soldiers.* Poor people! they were innocent, yet they experienced the wrath of Herod. Would that they had only found the way as the Philippian jailor did on a similar occasion! (Williger).

But Herod, etc. (ver. 19). Thus he acted like his grandfather, who for the rescued child Jesus slew the innocent children of Bethlehem (Williger).—*And he went down from Judea to Cæsarea.* In Jerusalem, he had not won for himself many laurels: Peter had escaped; the death of James evidently appeared as an act of injustice, and had placed the holiness of the apostle in a so much clearer light (Williger).—Great lords seek by all manner of changes to drive away annoyance and vexation (Starke).—Herod busied himself elsewhere, and during that time God's people received some relief. Thus the invasion of the Philistines drew away Saul from David, 1 Sam. xxiii. 27. Thus the Turkish war and the assistance necessary for it, and also the disunion between France and Austria, brought deliverance to the Protestant cause (Rieger).

On the whole section (vers. 1–19).—*Times of trial, testing times.* Then is tested, 1. The sincerity of faith in suffering and death (vers. 1–3); 2. Brotherly love in watching and prayer (ver. 5); 3. Spiritual peace in rest and waiting (ver. 6); 4. The power of God in rescuing and helping (vers. 7–11), (Florey).—*The weapons of the Church in the contest against its enemies.* 1. Inflexible courage in witnessing. 2. Quiet patience in suffering. 3. Unwearied perseverance in prayer (Leonh. and Spieg.).—*The fellowship of saints.* 1. A fellowship of love among the brethren (ver. 5). 2. A fellowship of and with angels (vers. 8, 9). 3. A fellowship of grace with God (ver. 11), (Leonh. and Spieg.).—The kings of the earth against the Lord and His Anointed: 1. How their enmity is expressed; 2. How the King of kings protects His people (Lisco).—The miraculous deliverance of Peter: 1. The circumstances of it; 2. The impression.—

The Lord helps His own: 1. Out of the greatest danger; 2. In a marvellous manner.—For a Reformation-festival: *The deliverance of the Church from prison by the work of the Reformation.* 1. The imprisonment of the Church: (*a*) Many of its true members and teachers were tormented and slain; (*b*) all Christianity lay in prison. 2. The deliverance of the Church: (*a*) How it took place: Luther smote her on the side, and led her through the iron gate. (*b*) How the evangelical Church has become gradually conscious of her freedom, and is even now to remain conscious of it (Lisco).—*How the Lord, in the wonderful leadings of His people, manifests His wisdom and love.* 1. His wisdom: (*a*) The Church, strengthened by long peace, stands in need of persecution; (*b*) James is slain, because in the counsel of God the Church, as well as the world, requires now the blood of a martyr from among the apostles; (*c*) Peter is arrested, his self-confidence humbled, and his final fate placed before his eyes. 2. His love: (*a*) James receives the crown of eternal life; (*b*) Peter the unexpected gift of deliverance for this life; (*c*) the praying Church their teacher from deadly danger, given in answer to their prayers, and miraculously presented to them anew (Lisco).—Human necessity and God's aid. The Lord's aid effects, 1. Holy joy among His people; 2. Impotent rage among His enemies.—The connection of the deliverance of Peter with the prayer of the Church, as an example of the connection between prayer and the answer to prayer.—God gives above all that we can ask or think.—*The bleeding James and the rescued Peter:* or, God leads His people by many paths to one end. 1. By many paths: (*a*) James' short period of work and Peter's long day of work; (*b*) James' sad end and Peter's glorious deliverance. 2. To one end: (*a*) Both promote the kingdom of God—James by his death, and Peter by his life; (*b*) both carry off the crown of eternal life—James after a short contest, and Peter after a long service.—*The deliverance of the rescued Peter.* 1. A triumph of divine power. 2. A reward of apostolic fidelity. 3. A fruit of intercessory brotherly love. 4. An overthrow of proud tyrannical rage.—*The rescuing angels of God.* 1. They come in the night (ver. 6). 2. They raise us from the ground (ver. 7). 3. They lead us as in a dream (ver. 9). 4. They bring us through iron doors (ver. 10). 5. They leave us alone (ver. 11).—*Peter's rescuing angel, an image of rescuing*

grace, as it leads, 1. Out of the fetters of sin to the liberty of the children of God; 2. out of the night of sorrow to the day of gratitude and joy; 3. out of the perils of death to the light of eternal life.—*Peter's deliverance from chains, an image of our gracious deliverance from the chains of sin.* 1. The severe imprisonment: (*a*) The chains; (*b*) the keepers; and (*c*) the sleep. 2. The merciful deliverance: (*a*) The messenger from heaven with his joyful light and awakening voice; (*b*) the awakening with its fears and joys; (*c*) the first walking, with its hindrances and aids (walking as in a dream through the first and second watch, and the iron gate). 3. The glorious liberty: (*a*) The firm standing on one's own feet; (*b*) the joyful reception by the brethren; (*c*) the impotent rage of the world.

But they came with one accord and desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country (ver. 20). For the sake of food, people pray willingly for peace and good weather. For this they put up with everything, which they would not submit to for the sake of God and their salvation. The world makes many compliments to the devil, but it will not give to God a single good word (Gossner).

On a set day (ver. 21). It was not only the day fixed by Herod for the feast, but also the day fixed by the Almighty for judgment (Apost. Past.).—*Herod set upon the tribunal.* Many a one designs to ascend the tribunal, and ascends the platform of his own death (Quesnel).

It is the voice of God (ver. 22). O cursed flattery! how presumptuous and shameless art thou still! A true pest of princes and lords, yet a common court artifice, on account of which these princes and lords are much to be pitied (Starke). —Carnal men, with the Jews, will not have the lowly Jesus for their king; but a boaster like Herod suits them: they will even have him for a god (The same).

But immediately the angel of the Lord smote him (ver. 23). This "immediately" is a terrible addition to the shouts of the people: an actual proof, "But He that dwelleth in heaven laughs: the Lord has them in derision" (Williger).—Certainly this "immediately" does not always follow the footsteps of crime; but it does not therefore remain away. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small.—*An angel of the Lord.* The world says, It was a singular disease: physicians can

tell in various ways how it originated. The Scripture says, An angel of the Lord smote him (Gossner).—An angel rescues Peter, and an angel smites Herod. The angels are friends or foes, according as they have before them the friends or foes of God (Starke).—Peter, laid in chains, guarded, and about to be led to judgment and death, is delivered. Herod, sitting on his throne, adored by the people, and surrounded with his court, is executed. Who will not adore the government of God? (Quesnel).—*And was eaten of worms.* Sometimes the pious and the wicked suffer the same; but it is not therefore the same. To the one, it is a fatherly correction; to the other, a righteous punishment. Job's body was also eaten of worms (Starke).—To throw down great tyrants, God requires not to summon many horsemen: even worms often do it.—Now after the Lord had thus spoken, it may be said in truth: This is the voice of God, and not of a man.

But the word of God grew and multiplied (ver. 24). Herod is eaten with worms; but the word of God grows and multiplies. A beautiful contrast. So is it always: one Herod vanishes after another, but the name of Jesus remains exalted (Apost. Past.).—God, by this removal of Herod, made the more room for His word and kingdom. Formerly the angel of the Lord said in a dream to Joseph, "They are dead who sought the young child's life," Matt. ii. 20. Here it may be said, They are dead who sought the life of the young child Jesus in His members (the young Church), (Bogatzky).

But Barnabas and Saul returned (ver. 25). This visit was a special strengthening of heart after the heat of trouble (Williger).—How puny the work of Barnabas and Saul, but yet how eternally abiding its fruit! How dazzling the business of Herod, but how worm-eaten and corrupt!

On vers. 20–25.—*The narrative of Herod's death.* 1. Wherefore has it found a place in the Acts of the Apostles? Not as if the death of Herod had been a punishment for the beheading of James, but also because political events are not matters of indifference to Christianity. 2. What are we to learn from it? That the common weal can prosper, not by flattery and yielding to the lusts and passions of men, but only when we are free from both, looking to the eternal and unchangeable will of God (Schleiermacher).—*The Lord is King!* 1. This His enemies

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